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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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## Search continues as ED sniffs Ranya, Parameshwara link

**BENGALURU, 22 MAY**

The ED on Thursday continued its searches at places linked to State Home Minister G Parameshwara as part of the probe into alleged gold smuggling-linked money laundering case against Kannada actress Ranya Rao and others, official sources said. According to sources, searches continued in Siddhartha Engineering College, Siddhartha Medical College and Siddhartha College in the State. The ED sleuths on Wednesday raided 16 locations in the State under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) targeting hawala operators and accommodation entry operators who allegedly made "fake" financial transactions into Rao's accounts. *—PTI*

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## K'taka govt to honour Banu with BDA land site

**BENGALURU, 22 MAY**

The Karnataka government has extended its congratulations to Banu Mushtaq for winning the prestigious International Booker Prize for her Kannada short story collection, "Heart Lamp." The award, worth GBP 50,000, was presented to Mushtaq at a ceremony held at Tate Modern in London. Deepa Bhasthi, who translated the work into English, was acknowledged alongside her. Following a cabinet meeting, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil expressed pride in Mushtaq's achievement, stating, "Her win has made Karnataka and India proud." Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar announced that the government is prepared to allocate a 'G' category site from the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) to Mushtaq, should she choose to accept it. 'G' category sites are designated for individuals in public life, reflecting the state's commitment to recognising contributions to literature and culture. *—PTI*

# SC stays ED probe in TN liquor scam

## SC flays ED for raiding state-run TASMAC, says agency is 'crossing all limits' & violating Constitution

**NEW DELHI, 22 MAY**

The Enforcement Directorate is crossing "all the limits" and violating the federal concept of governance, the Supreme Court on Thursday. The court said this while staying the money laundering probe against Tamil Nadu-run liquor retailer TASMAC over alleged corruption in grant of wine shop licences.

Issuing notice to the ED on pleas filed by the Tamil Nadu government and the Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation (TASMAC), a bench comprising Chief Justice BR Gavai and Justice Augustine George Masih told Additional Solicitor General SV Raju, appearing for the anti-money laundering probe agency, that "Your ED is crossing all the limits."

"The Enforcement Directorate is acting in violation of the Constitution and federal structure by initiating action against a government body," the bench observed, adding that the ED's probe against the state-run TASMAC will not proceed in the meantime. The law officer opposed the order, saying the issue involved corruption over Rs 1,000 crore and the ED is not crossing the limits "at least in this case."

The DMK-run state government and TASMAC moved the top court against the raids conducted by the ED at the premises of TASMAC in Tamil Nadu *PHOTO: PTI*

The bench took note of the submissions of senior advocates Kapil Sibal and Amit Anand Tiwari that the state itself has lodged over 40 FIRs in cases related to allotment of liquor shop licences from 2014 and now the ED jumps in the picture and raids the TASMAC.

"How can you raid the state-run TASMAC," the bench asked. The DMK-run state government and TASMAC moved the top court against the raids conducted by the ED at the premises of TASMAC.

The pleas challenged an 23 April order of the Madras High Court dismissing its pleas giving the go ahead for the ED action.

The ED was allowed to proceed with its action under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. *—PTI*

*>>>More on Page 3*

## SC cracks down on NEET seat blocking

**NEW DELHI, 22 MAY**

The Supreme Court has mandated all private and deemed universities to disclose fees in advance of NEET-PG counselling, in a landmark move aimed at curbing widespread seat blocking in postgraduate medical admissions.

A bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and R Mahadevan, in its April 29 order, expressed concern that seat blocking distorts the real-time availability of seats and undermines merit-based selection. The court criticised the practice as a reflection of systemic flaws, including fragmented governance and lack of transparency.

"Seat blocking is not merely an isolated wrongdoing – it reflects deeper flaws rooted in fragmented governance, weak enforcement, and lack of real-time oversight," the bench observed.

To tackle this, the court ordered the implementation of a nationally synchronised counselling calendar to align All India Quota and state counselling rounds, preventing overlaps and manipulation. It also directed the National Medical Commission to establish a centralised fee regulation framework. Universities must disclose all charges—including tuition, hostel, caution deposit and miscellaneous fees—before counselling begins. Strict penalties were mandated for seat blocking: forfeiture of security deposits, disqualification from future NEET-PG exams, and blacklisting of institutions involved.*—PTI*

**DISTRICT HQ UNCHANGED**

# Ramanagara is now called B'luru South

**BENGALURU, 22 MAY**

The Karnataka Cabinet on Thursday approved the renaming of neighbouring Ramanagara district as 'Bengaluru South'.

Ramanagara, about 50km from here, will remain as the headquarters of the renamed district, comprising of Magadi, Kanakapura, Channapatna and Harohalli taluks.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said that the State cabinet decided to name Ramnagar as Bengaluru South within the framework of law.

However, there will be no change in Ramanagara functioning as the headquarters of the district.

Notification will be issued and the necessary process will be follow.

On the Centre opposing the cabinet's earlier decision, Shivakumar said that the central government has no powers on this issue. Responding to a question on opposition's claim that development won't happen from name change, Shivakumar said, "Let them wait and see."

Union Minister and JD(S) leader HD Kumaraswamy was the Chief Minister of the JD(S)-BJP coalition, when Ramanagara district was carved out in August 2007.

DK Shivakumar *PHOTO: PTI*

Kumaraswamy had earlier threatened to go on a protest if the Karnataka government decides to go-ahead with the proposal to rename the district.

Ramanagara district had been the political turf of JD(S) and Kumaraswamy as he had earlier represented Ramanagara and Channapatna Assembly segments, and also had been an MP from the region. *—PTI*

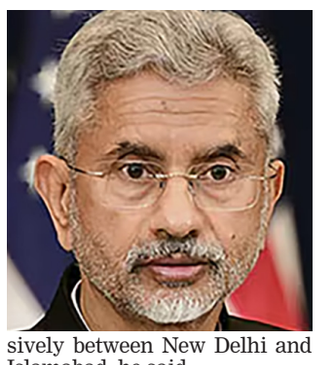
# EAM denies US role in ceasefire

**NEW DELHI, 22 MAY**

The India-Pakistan ceasefire was arrived at following direct negotiations between the two sides, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar reiterated on Thursday against the backdrop of US President Donald Trump's claim that Washington played a role in brokering the truce.

"The US was in the United States," Jaishankar said in response to a question about Washington's involvement in an interview to Dutch broadcaster NOS. He confirmed that US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Vice President JD Vance had reached out –Rubio to him and Vance to Prime Minister Narendra Modi – but their role was limited to expressing concern.

While other countries also made calls to both sides, the ceasefire was negotiated exclusively between New Delhi and Islamabad, he said.



"We made one thing very clear to everybody who spoke to us, not just the United States but to everyone, saying if the Pakistanis want to stop fighting, they need to tell us. We need to hear it from them. Their general has to call up our general and say this. And that is what happened," he said.

**India warns Turkey, China**

Meanwhile, India in a strong message to Turkey over its support to Pakistan said that New Delhi expects Ankara to encourage Islamabad to address the problem of cross-border terrorism emanating from it.

New Delhi also asked Turkey to dissuade Pakistan from using terrorism as an instrument of state policy and take credible and verifiable actions against the terror ecosystem that Islamabad and Rawalpindi have harboured for decades.

India also reminded China that "mutual" trust, respect and sensitivity are the basis of its ties with China, in remarks that came against the backdrop of Pakistani military using several Chinese weapons systems during its four-day confrontation with the armed forces. *—Agencies*

### Soldier killed in encounter with terrorists in Kishtwar

A soldier was killed in an encounter with terrorists during a cordon and search operation launched by security forces in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district on Thursday, officials said. The gunfight took place when the forces were conducting a search following a tip-off about the presence of terrorists in the Shingpora area, they said. Four terrorists are said to be trapped in the area. Additional troops have been deployed and the operation is ongoing to neutralise the terrorists.

### Pakistan expels Indian high commission official

Pakistan on Thursday expelled an official of the Indian high commission. Pakistan asked the official to leave the country within 24 hours, stating that he did things that did not align with his official duties. Pakistani Foreign Ministry told the Indian Chargé d'Affaires in Islamabad that Indian officials should refrain from misusing their diplomatic status. The development followed India expelling a Pakistani official from its high commission in New Delhi for allegedly spying.

## A month on, Pahalgam terrorists remain at large

**PAHALGAM, 22 MAY**

A month after 25 tourists and a local ponywallah were killed by terrorists in Pahalgam, the perpetrators are still at large despite the massive crackdown launched by security forces across the Kashmir.

While several top terrorists have been killed in various operations, those behind the massacre have eluded the security forces.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has questioned 100 suspects, including various service providers at Baisaran.

The NIA released sketches of three suspects--Adil Hussain Thoker, a resident of Anantnag and two Pakistani nationals, Ali Bhai aka Talha Bhai and Hashim Musa aka Suleiman.

The investigators also analysed the mobile dump data around Pahalgam and videos captured by tourists on the day of the massacre to retrace the path taken by the terrorists to reach Baisaran. Four to six terrorists were involved in the massacre. Thousands of suspects across Kashmir were questioned and hundreds detained. *—PTI*

*>>>More on Page 3*

Fire and police personnel at a factory after a fire broke out, at Ujhani area, in Budaun district, Uttar Pradesh *PHOTO: PTI*

## UP storm causes fire & wall collapse, eight killed

**LUCKNOW, 22 MAY**

At least eight individuals have lost their lives due to a series of incidents caused by strong winds and heavy rainfall across Uttar Pradesh, which resulted in extensive damage, including fallen trees and property destruction.

In Meerut, three people, including a doctor, were killed in rain-related incidents. Subahan Saifi, 25, died when a unipole collapsed onto his car, while Amit Chaudhary, 32, was killed by a falling tree as he sought shelter. A daily wager, Mansoor, trapped under a collapsed wall. Saharanpur saw a lightning strike kill Anil, 65, injuring his nephew Mohit.

A significant fire engulfed an oil factory in Budaun, triggered by strong winds causing sparks that ignited chemicals. *—PTI*

*>>>More on Page 4*

**DESPITE FARE HIKE**

# *Namma Metro travellers must now pay to use toilets at stations*

**BENGALURU, 22 MAY**

Despite a recent hike in metro fares, the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) has introduced user charges for toilet facilities at Namma Metro stations, triggering widespread public backlash.

According to BMRCL sources, passengers will now be required to pay between Rs 2 and Rs 5 to access toilets at select metro stations. Staff have been deployed to collect the charges, and signage indicating the new rates has been installed.

In the initial phase, the charges will apply at stations including National College, Lalbagh, South End Circle, Jayanagar, RV Road, Banashankari, JP Nagar, Yelachenahalli, Sir M Visvesvaraya Station, Dr BR Ambedkar Station – Vidhana Soudha, Cubbon Park, and KSR Railway Station. Commuters have voiced strong opposition, arguing that access to sanitation at public transport hubs should be free. Many have labelled the fee a "daylight tax" on essential services, calling it unjust and burdensome, particularly after recent fare increases. BMRCL officials defended the move, stating that the collected fees will fund the maintenance of cleanliness and toilet infrastructure. They clarified that the charge only applies to toilets located in the unpaid zones, which are accessible to the general public. "Toilets in the paid areas remain free for Metro commuters," a senior official said.

Commuter groups, however, are demanding a rollback, warning that such policies could deter public transport usage *PHOTO: PTI*

The facilities are being handed over to Sulabh International, a recognised sanitation provider. *—Salar News*

# SC reserves interim orders in Waqf case

**NEW DELHI, 22 MAY**

The Supreme Court on Thursday reserved its interim order on three contentious provisions of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, reaffirming the presumption of constitutionality in favour of the law.

A bench of Chief Justice BR Gavai and Justice Augustine George Masih heard senior advocates Kapil Sibal, Rajeev Dhavan, and others for the petitioners, and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta for the Centre, over three days.

Key challenges included the power to denotify properties declared as Waqf, the composition of Waqf boards, and a provision stating Waqf status would be suspended during inquiries into whether land belongs to the government.

Sibal called the law a "complete departure" from constitutional principles, accusing the Centre of enabling "non-judicial capture" of Qaqf land. He argued that Section 3C strips Muslims of rights without a fair determination process.

The Centre defended the law as secular in nature, asserting that waqf was not an essential Islamic practice. Mehta said only practicing Muslims for at least five years could create waqf, a clause meant to prevent fraud. He emphasised that tribal rights in scheduled areas remain protected. The bench questioned whether religious identity could override constitutional safeguards for tribal land.The court's interim decision is now awaited. *—PTI*

CJI Gavai *PHOTO: PTI*

# ED continues to raid premises linked to HM

## Parameshwara meets CM; DKS calls him an 'honest man'

**BENGALURU, 22 MAY**

The ED on Thursday continued its searches at places linked to State Home Minister G Parameshwara as part of the probe into alleged gold smuggling-linked money laundering case against Kannada actress Ranya Rao and others, official sources said.

According to sources, searches continued in Siddhartha Engineering College, Siddhartha Medical College and Siddhartha College in the State.

The ED sleuths on Wednesday raided 16 locations in the State under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) targeting hawala operators and accommodation entry operators who allegedly made "fake" financial transactions into Rao's accounts.

"An educational trust" is suspected to have "diverted" funds and made a payment of Rs 40 lakh towards the credit card bill of Rao, on the instructions of an influential individual, the sources said.

Parameshwara meanwhile assured full cooperation with the ED. "As a person who believes in the law of the land, I am prepared to cooperate with whatever comes out of their verifications or searches" .

He declined to comment on the investigation and or fuelled the speculation that he was targeted because he is a Dalit.

Parameshwara also called on Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. Congress sources said he apprised Siddaramaiah of the situation.

Many rallied behind Parweshwara's, most notably Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, who said he was "clean and honest man".

"I spoke to Parameshwara, I visited him in the morning. He has given Rs 15-25 lakh, we are in public life, many run trusts. At a family event or marriage, gifts might have been given," Shivakumar said. *—PTI*

State Home Minister G Parameshwara *PHOTO: PTI*

> **This is political targeting.... This is just another intimidation tactic by the central government... ED, IT, CBI are being used for political reasons to destabilise governments of other parties**
>
>
>
> -Priyank Kharge, Minister of Rural Development

> **At a family event or marriage, gifts might have been given. Will an influential person like Parameshwara encourage her (Ranya Rao) to indulge in illegal things like smuggling...? Charitable institutions often help people... small charity might have been done for marriage... I'm not denying it**
>
>
>
> -DK Shivakumar, Dy Chief Minister

> **The ED actions undertaken at the behest of the PM himself reflect the politics of harassment, vendetta, and intimidation of which he is the master. The BJP is clearly nervous and worried by the achievements of the Karnataka government over the past two years**
>
>
>
> -Jairam Ramesh, Congress communications head

An open manhole on Kamakshipalya Main Road in Bengaluru poses a huge threat to the lives and limbs of motorists *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

## Lokayukta inspects rain-hit areas

**BENGALURU 22 MAY**

In the wake of heavy rains that battered several parts of the city, Lokayukta Justice BS Patil and Upa Lokayukta Justice Veerappa conducted a spot inspection of the worst-hit areas on Thursday.

The officials visited flood-prone zones including Silk Board Junction, Panathur Cross, Panathur Main Road, and Sai Layout, where residents have raised concerns about persistent flooding and civic negligence.

During the visit, the Lokayukta team reviewed the progress of drainage work, road widening, and the construction of an underpass near the railway crossing. Expressing strong displeasure over the incomplete infrastructure projects, Justice Patil pulled up civic officials and instructed them to expedite all pending works without further delay.

The inspection highlighted poor planning and lack of coordination among agencies, which continue to leave low-lying areas vulnerable during the monsoon.

Justice Phaneendra and several senior civic officials were also part of the inspection team.

The Lokayukta has reportedly sought a follow-up report on the status of these projects. *—Salar News*

## Bommai calls for reinstating Jan Aushadhi Kendras

**HAVERI, 22 MAY**

State MP and former chief minister Basavaraj Bommai called on Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to revoke the State government's suspension of Jan Aushadhi Kendras within government hospitals in Haveri district. In a recent letter, Bommai highlighted the appeal from local Kendra owners, asserting that the suspension would undermine the

central government's aim of providing affordable generic medicines to economically disadvantaged sections of society. *—ANI*

**SUSPENSE PREVAILS**

## Decision on caste census in Cabinet 'incomplete'

**BENGALURU, 22 MAY**

The discussion on the Social and Educational Survey report, popularly known as 'caste census', at the State Cabinet meeting on Thursday was "incomplete" and it will be discussed again on a later date, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil said.

Most of the Ministers have submitted their opinion on the survey in writing to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

"The Cabinet today once again discussed the Social and Educational Survey report, the discussion was incomplete. The Chief Minister had earlier asked the Cabinet Ministers to give their opinion in writing and most of the ministers' opinions have reached the Chief Minister except three or four," Patil said.

The last Cabinet meeting on 10 May had decided to defer any decision as additional information was provided to Ministers. Sources said that additional volumes of the survey report, including the taluk wise and district wise population data were provided.

On Tuesday, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge had urged Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to ensure that the census is done properly.

"Do the census, but that census should be done properly, and it should not bring disrepute to Rahul Gandhi. If you do things to take credit for yourselves, it will cause problems for the entire State," Kharge said, addressing an event at Hosapete, marking the Congress government's two years in office. *—PTI*

## WOMAN TIED UP IN BAGALKOT COWSHED FOR 7 YEARS

**BAGALKOT, 22 MAY**

A woman in Bagalkot has been tied up in a cattle shed for the past seven years after she reportedly lost her mental stability and following her husband's mysterious disappearance just two months after marriage.

The incident took place in Vadageri village of Ilkal taluk in Bagalkot district.

The woman, Shankaravva Sebinakatti, aged 26, from Vadageri married Piddappa from Goodur on 14 February, 2018.

The couple began their married life happily. But two months after the wedding, Piddappa left the house one morning and never returned since. Deeply in love with her husband, Shankaravva was shocked by his absence and lost her mental balance.

She reportedly attacks her mother daily and has attempted suicide by jumping into a well. As a result, she was tied up by her hands and confined to the cattle shed.

When asked if anyone would tie up their own daughter like this, her mother, Devakka, tearfully said, "What else can we do? Otherwise, she attacks me and tries to jump into the well. We have no choice."

Shankaravva's family was engaged in construction work in the City. After the wedding, the couple also had gone to City for work. While her parents stayed in HSR Layout, the couple resided in Kasavanahalli. Piddappa went missing while they were in City. A complaint was filed at Bellandur Police Station.

Despite extensive searches, Piddappa was never found. He used to drive a truck and would often travel to different states, sometimes returning after six months or even longer. *—Salar News*

## City auto driver killed by colleague in drunken brawl

**BENGALURU, 22 MAY**

A long-standing dispute between two autorickshaw drivers in Rajagopalnagar turned tragic when one allegedly pushed the other to the ground, resulting in death. The deceased, 55-year-old Rangaswamy, a resident of Basappanakatte, was known to verbally abuse his fellow driver, Vinay, who also resides in the area. On Tuesday evening at approximately 9.30pm, Rangaswamy, reportedly intoxicated, confronted Vinay outside a bar, launching into another tirade of abuse. A heated argument ensued, which escalated to violence as Vinay allegedly pushed Rangaswamy, causing him to fall and sustain a severe head injury. Rangaswamy was subsequently taken to a nearby hospital, where he sadly succumbed to his injuries late on Wednesday night. The Rajagopalnagar police have arrested Vinay on suspicion of culpable homicide, and investigations are ongoing. *—Salar News*

## Woman found in suitcase was strangled: Cops

**BENGALURU, 22 MAY**

Police have confirmed that a woman whose body was discovered stuffed in a suitcase on the outskirts of City was strangled to death. The grim find occurred near Surya City, where the suitcase was abandoned on railway tracks in Anekal. Authorities suspect that the woman may have been murdered elsewhere before her body was disposed of from a moving train.

Superintendent of Police (Bengaluru Rural) CK Baba stated, "The woman was strangulated, and the body was likely pushed from a moving train." The investigation is in its early stages, with the primary objective being the identification of the deceased. Six investigative teams have been assembled to pursue leads.

Preliminary examinations revealed no signs of rape or other injury marks, raising further questions about the circumstances surrounding her death—*PTI*

## TV actor Madhenuru Manu held for rape, threats and cheating

**BENGALURU, 22 MAY**

A Television actor Madhenur Manu, known for his appearance in the show 'Comedy Khiladi', was arrested for rape, miscarriage of woman without her consent, cheating and criminal intimidation by the Annapoorneshwarinagar police following a complaint by a 33-year-old actress.

According to the police, the complainant and Manu became friends in 2018 during their association with the comedy show. Despite being married and a fathering a girl child, Manu allegedly pursued a relationship with the actress,

who was then residing in Banashankari and now lives in Nagarabhavi.

In her complaint, the actress alleged that on 29 November 2022, while in Shivamogga's Shikaripura for a programme, Manu sexually assaulted her in a hotel room under the pretext of settling her performance payment.

She further stated that on 3 December 2022, despite her protest, Manu forcibly tied a mangalsutra around her neck and continued to sexually exploit her at her home.

He allegedly recorded private videos without her consent and threatened her against speaking out.

The actress also claimed Manu forced her to undergo two abortions after she became pregnant and cheated her out of several lakhs of rupees invested in a film project he was leading *—Salar News with Agencies*

## KSDL picks Tamannaah as brand ambassador

**BAGALKOT, 22 MAY**

The State government has appointed Bollywood actress Tamannaah Bhatia as the brand ambassador of Karnataka Soaps and Detergents Limited (KSDL), which manufactures Mysore Sandal Soap.

The State government's order issued on Wednesday said Bhatia was appointed as the brand ambassador for two years and two days at a cost of Rs 6.2 crore.

The decision drew flak from several pro-Kannada who questioned her appointment.

"When local Kannada young actresses like Ashika Ranganath could be taken, why appoint and promote Hindi ones?" a woman questioned the decision on X.

Reacting to it, State Commerce and Industries Minister MB Patil on Thursday explained that the decision was taken after much deliberation "to penetrate markets beyond Karnataka aggressively".

The KSDL has the deepest respect and regards to the Kannada film industry, Patil said.

"Mysore Sandal has a very good brand recall within Karnataka, which shall be strengthened. However the intent of Mysore Sandal is to also

Tamannaah Bhatia was appointed as the brand ambassador for two years to help the State aggressively penetrate market newer markets

penetrate markets beyond Karnataka aggressively," the minister clarified.

"The pride of Karnataka is also a Jewel of the Nation. Hence it's an independent strategic decision of the PSU board after consulting various marketing experts," he elaborated.

Choosing a brand ambassador takes a lot of deliberation over social media presence, coherence with the brand, product and target audience and marketing fit and reach, he said.

"Our vision is for KSDL to touch annual revenue of Rs 5,000 crore by 2028," the minister said. *—PTI*

## Man held for robbing City pub

**BENGALURU 22 MAY**

A 29-year-old man from Odisha has been arrested for allegedly breaking into Geometry Brewery and Kitchen in Rajajinagar, absconding with cash amounting to Rs 60,000.

The suspect, identified as Dilip Kumar, a BCom graduate, reportedly arrived in City in search of work. In the early hours of 12 May, around 4 am, he is said to have gained entry to the pub by forcing open a rear door. Wearing a mask, he proceeded to the third-floor office, where he was spotted by a security guard.

According to police reports,

the guard claimed the intruder brandished a firearm, prompting him to secure the main doors and alert the police via the emergency control room (112). However, by the time officers arrived and conducted a search, the suspect had already fled. Investigations later uncovered tampered CCTV wires and a missing cash box containing approximately Rs 60,000.

After an extensive investigation involving CCTV analysis, local intelligence, and technical surveillance, police traced Dilip to his home village in Odisha, where he had been hiding. He was apprehended earlier this week and brought back to City for questioning. Authorities have registered a case under relevant sections concerning theft and criminal intimidation, though the use of a firearm has not yet been confirmed. Further investigations are ongoing *—Salar News*

**IN FOUR DAYS**

## *Pourakarmika hiring to be tracked on dashboard*

**BENGALURU, 22 MAY**

In a move aimed at speeding up the recruitment process of pourakarmikas, a real-time dashboard will soon be launched on the Seva Sindhu portal to track the current status of appointments, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) said in a notification on Thursday.

According to BBMP Special Commissioner for Administration, Naveen Kumar Raju, the Directorate of Electronic Delivery of Citizen Services (EDCS) has been instructed to create and deploy the dashboard within four days.

The dashboard will provide transparent and up-to-date information on the progress of the recruitment and documentation process, particularly the uploading of the verification certificates—a key step in confirming the eligibility of applicants.

As part of the ongoing recruitment drive, 12,692 pourakarmikas are set to be appointed across City.

Of these, 6,000 posts fall under the general category, while the remaining 6,692 are reserved. So far, verification certificates of only 700 candidates have been uploaded.

The BBMP aims to upload 5,000 certificates by the end of May, officials said.

Once the dashboard is live, it is expected to bring greater accountability and accelerate the completion of the recruitment process *—Salar News*

## Man missing after walk; woman's body still unclaimed

**BENGALURU 22 MAY**

Basaveshwaranagar police are investigating two unrelated but concerning cases — one involving a missing elderly man and the other, an unclaimed body of a woman who died earlier this month.

A 62-year-old man, Maruti, who had recently arrived from Davanagere to stay with his son in Basaveshwaranagar, went missing on the morning of May 20. According to his family, he left home around 9.15am for a walk at Udayaravi Park but never returned. Maruti reportedly suffers from nerve-related issues and mild memory loss. Police have urged anyone with information to contact Basaveshwara Nagar Police Station at 080-22942516 or his son Rakesh at 81235 55949.

In a separate incident, the body of a 75-year-old woman, identified as Muniyamma, was discovered on May 10 in a small room where she lived in Mahaganapathi Nagar. Known to sell flowers for a living, she was reportedly suffering from health issues. Though she mentioned having a daughter, no family member has come forward so far to claim her body.

Basaveshwara Nagar police have requested anyone with information to contact the station. *—Salar News*

## SC stops IAF from releasing officer involved in Ops

**NEW DELHI, 22 MAY**

The Supreme Court on Thursday directed the Centre and Indian Air Force (IAF) not to release Wing Commander Nikita Pandey, who participated in Operations Balakot and Sindoor, after she was denied permanent commission.A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh sought responses on Pandey's plea, alleging discrimination. The court praised the IAF's professionalism and said prolonged uncertainty was harmful to officer morale. Pandey, an expert fighter controller with over 13 years' service, ranked second nationally in her field. Her counsel, Menaka Guruswamy, said she was affected by a 2019 policy. The court barred her release pending further orders and posted the next hearing for August 6.—*PTI*

## Jyoti Malhotra's remand extended in espionage case

**HISAR, 22 MAY**

A local court has extended the police remand of content creator and social media influencer Jyoti Malhotra by an additional four days, following her arrest on suspicion of espionage. The 33-year-old YouTuber, who operates the channel "Travel with JO," was apprehended alongside 11 others from Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh amid investigations into a potential Pakistan-linked spy network. Although police admitted lack of evidence to suggest Malhotra had access to sensitive military information, they confirmed she had contact with known Pakistani intelligence operatives. Investigations exposed her communications with Ehsan-ur-Rahim, a staff member at the Pakistani High Commission, and her previous travels to Pakistan.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

## AP police disrupt Sharmila's stir for steel plant workers

**VISAKHAPATNAM, 22 MAY**

An indefinite hunger strike led by Andhra Congress president YS Sharmila in support of dismissed contract workers at the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP) was halted by police just hours after it began. Sharmila commenced her protest around 1:30pm on Wednesday, demanding the reinstatement of 2,000 contract workers. However, by 9pm, police intervened and took her to Gajuwaka police station before later escorting her back to Hyderabad. Tensions escalated as workers resisted the police action, prompting Congress leaders and union members to label the arrest as "inhumane" and "politically motivated" by the ruling NDA coalition. —*PTI*

## HC refuses to quash FIR against Alt News' Zubair

**PRAYAGRAJ, 22 MAY**

The Allahabad High Court on Thursday declined to quash an FIR against Alt News co-founder Mohammad Zubair, lodged by Ghaziabad Police for allegedly promoting enmity between religious groups. The FIR was filed following a complaint by Udita Tyagi, linked to controversial priest Yati Narsinghanand. Tyagi alleged Zubair shared an edited video clip of Narsinghanand's old speech on X (formerly Twitter), labelling it "derogatory" and provoking Muslim outrage. Zubair argued in court that his post aimed only to alert authorities and did not incite violence. He also challenged defamation charges under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, stating the video was already public. While the bench of Justices Siddhartha Varma and Dr YK Srivastava allowed the investigation to proceed, it ordered that Zubair not be arrested during the probe.—*PTI*

# India will hit back if Pak taunts: EAM

## Congress asks PM, why he's mum on US

**NEW DELHI, 22 MAY**

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday said India will again hit terrorists in Pakistan in case of any future terror strikes like the one in Pahalgam, suggesting that it was the reason why Operation Sindoor has not been concluded.

Talking to Dutch broadcaster NOS, he said the government was very clear that "if there is such an attack, there will be a response". Jaishankar was in The Hague as part of his three-nation tour of the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany. "The operation continues because there is a clear message in that operation – that if there are acts of the kind we saw on 22 April, there will be a response, that we will hit the terrorists," he said.

"If the terrorists are in Pakistan, we will hit them where they are. So, there is a message in continuing the operation but continuing the operation is not the same as firing on each other," he said.

Meanwhile, the Congress on Thursday alleged that the diplomatic delegations being sent abroad were part of the government's "WMD – weapons of mass distraction" exercise and demanded Prime Minister Narendra Modi call a special session of Parliament and clarify US President Donald Trump's India-Pakistan ceasefire claims.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar interacts with representatives of the Indian community in Copenhagen on Thursday PHOTO: PTI

- The Congress on Thursday termed the diplomatic delegations sent abroad as the government's "WMD – weapons of mass distraction" exercise and demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi call a special session of Parliament and clarify US President Donald Trump's India-Pakistan ceasefire claims

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh also said that instead of throwing out grand sounding but hollow filmy dialogues in public rallies, as he did in Bikaner on Thursday, the prime minister should answer the serious questions being asked of him.

"Why are the brutal killers of Pahalgam still free -- according to some reports, they had been responsible for three earlier terror attacks in Poonch, Gagangir and Gulmarg over the past 18 months. Why have you not chaired any all-party meeting and taken the opposition parties into confidence?" Ramesh posted on X. —*PTI*

All-party delegation at UAE PHOTO: PTI

# Delegations brief UAE, Japan on Op Sindoor

**ABU DHABI/TOKYO, 22 MAY**

India on Thursday launched its global outreach against terrorism emanating from Pakistan as multi-party delegations reached the United Arab Emirates and Japan to assert the right to self-defence following Operation Sindoor.

The delegation to Japan is led by JD(U) MP Sanjay Jha while Shiv Sena MP Shrikant Shinde is leading the delegation to the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The two delegations held multiple meetings with ministers, prominent persons and think-tank officials too.

The Indian embassy in the UAE posted on X, "Together in the fight against terrorism! The All-party delegation led by @DrSEShinde held a fruitful meeting with HE Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan @uaetolerance in Abu Dhabi. Reaffirmed their commitment to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations."

UAE's Defence Affairs Chairman Ali Rashid Al Nuaimi said, "Terrorism is a threat not just to a single nation or region, but it is a global threat. We believe that we, as an international community, should come together, especially the Members of Parliament, to work on putting plans and strategies and engage in creating a better future for all humanity."

The delegation led by Jha to Japan also posted on X, "All-Party Parliamentary Delegation met HE Takeshi Iwaya, Foreign Minister of Japan. India's national consensus and resolute commitment to combat terrorism in all forms was reaffirmed. FM reiterated Japan's support to India's fight against terrorism and expressed appreciation for the restraint shown by the Indian side. He called for punishing the perpetrators of terror activities." —*PTI*

> **Congress excluding Shashi Tharoor from the list of people to lead the Centre's delegations on 'Operation Sindoor' was akin to insulting him. All this was an unnecessary controversy. I spoke to him. I believe he won't leave the party**
>
> —K Sudhakaran, ex-KPCC chief

# Hot 'sindoor' runs in my veins now, says Modi

**BIKANER, 22 MAY**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the country's enemies have learnt what happens when 'sindoor' becomes gunpowder, and lauded India's armed forces for creating such a trap that Pakistan was forced to go down on its knees.

In his first public address in Rajasthan after Operation Sindoor launched in response to the Pahalgam terror attack, the PM slammed Pakistan and said, "We destroyed nine biggest terror hideouts in 22 minutes".

"The world and the enemies of the country have seen what happens when 'sindoor' (vermillion) turns into 'barood' (gunpowder)," he said at the public meeting in Palana in Bikaner, which shares border with Pakistan.

"Not blood but hot sindoor runs in Modi's veins now)," he said, adding that Pakistan will have to pay a heavy price for every terrorist attack.

The PM said India's response to the terror attack was not a game of vengeance but a "new form of justice" and there will be no trade or talk with Pakistan, there will be talk only about Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

"If there is a terrorist attack on India, it will get a befitting reply. The time and methods will also be decided by our army and the conditions will also be ours. —*PTI*

## Amrit Bharat stations scheme – What is it?

The Prime Minister on Thursday inaugurated 103 Amrit Bharat railway stations across 18 states, in a major push to modernise Indian Railways. These are part of the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, a nationwide initiative to gradually upgrade railway stations with a focus on modern functionality while retaining regional character. Each station receives a customised development plan tailored to its needs, with phased improvements aimed at enhancing passenger comfort.

### Key upgrades under the scheme:

- Cleaner platforms and better-maintained toilets
- Modern waiting halls with more seating
- Improved entry/exit points and roofing for shelters
- Installation of lifts, escalators, and free Wi-Fi
- Clear signage and advanced information systems

# Kiru hydropower scam: CBI chargesheets Satyapal Malik

**NEW DELHI, 22 MAY**

The CBI has filed a chargesheet against former Jammu and Kashmir governor Satyapal Malik and seven others in connection with alleged corruption in awarding a Rs 2,200-crore civil works contract for the Kiru Hydropower Project, officials said on Thursday.

The chargesheet, submitted before a special court after a three-year probe, names Malik, his aides Virender Rana and Kanwar Singh Rana, along with senior officials of Chenab Valley Power Projects Pvt Ltd (CVPPPL) and Patel Engineering Ltd.

Satyapal Malik PHOTO: ANI

Others charged include CVPPPL's former managing director MS Babu, directors Arun Kumar Mishra and MK Mittal, Rupen Patel, MD of Patel Engineering, and private individual Kanwaljeet Singh Duggal.

Malik, who governed J&K from August 2018 to October 2019, previously alleged he was offered a Rs 300-crore bribe to approve two files, including the Kiru project. In a message on X, he said he was hospitalised and unable to take calls. —*Agencies*

# Punjab's Mann fumes at Centre move for CISF cover at Nangal

**CHANDIGARH, 22 MAY**

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann has condemned the central government's decision to deploy 296 personnel from the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) to secure the Nangal dam. Mann questioned the necessity of this move, arguing that the Punjab Police had already been providing adequate security.

Addressing the media in Sangrur, Mann pointed out that the deployment, which will reportedly cost Rs 8.58 crore per annum, is unwarranted, as Punjab Police offers these services free of charge. He indicated his firm opposition to the deployment, asserting, "We will neither permit money to be paid through the Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB) nor from the Punjab state exchequer."

The deployment comes amid ongoing tensions between Punjab and Haryana over water-sharing from the dam. Mann raised concerns regarding the Centre's intentions, questioning whether the decision was an attempt to "steal" Punjab's share of water. — *Agencies*

# Delhi urges SC to drop 7 cases on LG authority

**NEW DELHI, 22 MAY**

The Delhi government, now led by the BJP, has approached the Supreme Court to withdraw seven cases that were initiated during the previous Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) administration. These cases challenged the authority of the Lieutenant Governor (L-G) over various statutory bodies, including those involved in solid waste management and the cleaning of the Yamuna River.

A bench comprising Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh directed the listing of this application for a hearing on Friday. Representing the Delhi government, Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati stated that the withdrawal of these cases would prevent unnecessary complications for the court. "These matters should not trouble this court anymore," Bhati remarked.

Notably, one of the cases, filed by the former AAP government, led the Supreme Court in July 2023 to stay a National Green Tribunal (NGT) order requiring the L-G to chair a high-level committee focused on the rejuvenation of the Yamuna. The court also agreed to hear the Delhi government's appeal against a January 19 NGT order and issued notices to the relevant petitioners.

The NGT had expressed concerns over the high pollution levels of the Yamuna, stating that Delhi's pollution levels were around 75 per cent higher than those in other river basin states. —*PTI*

**LIQUOR SCAM**

# *TASMAC probe stay a blow to BJP: DMK*

**CHENNAI, 22 MAY**

The Supreme Court's decision to stay the Enforcement Directorate (ED) probe into alleged money laundering in Tamil Nadu's state-run liquor retailer TASMAC is a "big blow" to the BJP's attempts to malign the DMK-led state government, senior DMK leader RS Bharathi said on Thursday.

Welcoming the apex court's order, Bharathi, the DMK's organisation secretary, alleged that the ED has been misused by the Centre since Prime Minister Narendra Modi assumed office in 2014 to target opposition-ruled states.

"In Tamil Nadu, ever since the DMK under Stalin came to power in 2021, its popularity and the Chief Minister's stature have continued to rise. Unable to digest this and the electoral successes of the DMK alliance, the BJP resorted to using the ED to malign our government," Bharathi told reporters.

He said the ED probe into TASMAC, based on alleged corruption in issuing wine shop licences, was politically motivated and timed strategically, "7-8 months ahead of the state elections."

Calling the SC order "a verdict that reflects the sentiments of the people of Tamil Nadu," Bharathi urged the Union government to stop misusing the ED.

- Welcoming the apex court's order, Bharathi, the DMK's organisation secretary, alleged that the ED has been misused by the Centre in BJP rule to target opposition-ruled states

He also described the ED as a "blackmailing organisation," citing cases where ED officials in Tamil Nadu and Kerala were arrested on bribery charges by state police, reinforcing concerns over the agency's credibility and impartiality.

"We welcome the Supreme Court's order," the former Rajya Sabha MP added. —*PTI*

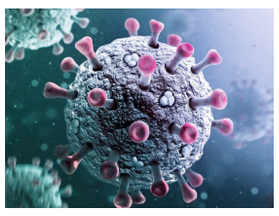


PHOTO: ANI

## After two-and-half yrs, Covid-19 case detected in Odisha

**BHUBANESWAR, 22 MAY**

Odisha has reported a new Covid-19 case after more than two and a half years, a senior government official confirmed. Health and Family Welfare Secretary S Aswathy stated the patient is currently stable, though they have several underlying health conditions. Neither the Union government nor the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) has issued any advisory on Covid-19 transmission. The Odisha health department is closely monitoring the situation. Aswathy assured the public that the situation is under control. She said the strain detected is mild, with low severity, and that no further advisories have been issued so far. The last reported Covid-19 case in Odisha was on 8 November 2022, when 26 cases were identified in the state. *—PTI*

## DRG jawan killed in Chhattisgarh in Naxals' IED blast

**NARAYANPUR, 22 MAY**

A District Reserve Guard (DRG) soldier was killed when an improvised explosive device (IED) planted by Naxalites detonated in Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur district. The incident occurred in the dense Abhujmad forest area on Wednesday evening, as security personnel were returning from a major clash with Maoists. In the encounter, at least 27 Naxalites, including the CPI (Maoist) general secretary Nambala Keshav Rao alias Basavaraju (70), were killed along the border of Narayanpur and Bijapur districts. During the return journey, DRG soldier Ramesh Hemla stepped on a pressure-activated IED, causing a blast that instantly killed him. Another DRG member, Khotluram Korram, was killed earlier during the same operation. *—PTI*

## Odisha to include widows in Kanya Vivah Yojana

**BHUBANESWAR, 22 MAY**

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi has directed officials to include widowed women under the 'Mukhya Mantri Kanya Vivah Yojana', a scheme supporting poor families in arranging their daughters' marriages. The scheme aims to conduct collective marriages, offering financial assistance and gifts to brides. A budget of Rs 12 crore has been allocated for 2025-26. Majhi emphasised the importance of empowering girls and easing marriage expenses, which often burden impoverished families. Previously, Odisha provided support for inter-caste marriages through various departments. He also reviewed progress of the PM Janman Yojana, sources said. *—PTI*

## Punjab & Haryana High Court gets bomb threat email

**CHANDIGARH, 22 MAY**

The Punjab and Haryana High Court was evacuated on Thursday following a bomb threat email claiming an IED had been planted within the premises. Chandigarh Police launched a thorough search, evacuated the court complex, and restricted public access. The threat was received during ongoing hearings, with senior officials, including the DGP and SSP, present. Police and bomb disposal experts responded swiftly, ensuring safety. No panic was reported, and court proceedings were temporarily suspended until a fter 2pm. The High Court Bar Association issued a notice urging members to remain vigilant and report any suspicious items. This incident follows a similar hoax bomb threat at the deputy commissioner's office in Ambala the previous day. *—PTI*

# SC notice to Centre on heatwave deaths

## Apex Court asks ministries to reply in two weeks on implementation of remedial actions

**NEW DELHI, 22 MAY**

Taking note of a PIL highlighting over 700 heatwave deaths in 2024, the Supreme Court has sought the Centre's response on a plea seeking directions to strictly implement national guidelines to prepare an action plan on the management of heatwave conditions.

A bench comprising Chief Justice BR Gavai and Justice Augustine George Masih issued notice to the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, National Disaster Management Authority and others, seeking their response within two weeks. The top court heard the plea filed by environment activist Vikrant Tongad, seeking direction to provide facilities for "forecast, issuance of heat alert/early warning systems and round-the-clock redressal helplines, among others.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

The counsel for Tongad submitted that over 700 deaths occurred due to heatwave and heat stress in 2024.

The petition highlighted that many states and union territories are yet to implement action plans under the National Guidelines for Preparation of Action Plan – Prevention and Management of Heatwave, 2019 issued by the National Disaster Management Authority.

The Centre's statutory responsibilities under Section 35 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005 required it to take appropriate measures for disaster management.

Section 3 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, obliges the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to act decisively to protect and improve environmental quality.

The plea sought compensation for the victims of heat-related illness and availability of minimum wages or other social and financial security to the vulnerable classes during the extreme heat.

It said that a meteorological monograph warned the risk of to increase ten folds in India in the 21st century, with over 70 per cent of the land area being affected by heatwaves. *—PTI*

## SC grants bail to Kerala RSS leader murder accused

**NEW DELHI, 22 MAY**

The Supreme Court on Wednesday granted bail to an accused in the 2022 murder of RSS leader Srinivasan in Kerala's Palakkad district. A bench granted bail to **Abdul Sathar**, Popular Front of India's (PFI) Kerala unit's former secretary general, saying he had no direct role in Srinivasan's assassination. The Kerala High Court in 2024 granted bail to 17 PFI members, who are also facing trial for ainstigating communal violence in the country. The Centre directed the NIA to probe the murder case. *—PTI*

## Bandh hits normal life in Imphal Valley

**GUWAHATI, 22 MAY**

The 48-hour state-wide bandh against the removal of the state's name from a government bus, called by Meitei organisation Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI), affected normal life across the five districts of Imphal Valley on Thursday.

All business establishments, educational institutions and government and private offices were closed and public vehicles remained off the roads. At Wangkhei, Khurai and Kongba in Imphal East district and Kwakeithel and Naoremthong in Imphal West district, agitators enforced the shutdown and asked people who ventured out to return home. Security has been tightened across Imphal to prevent any untoward incident.

Central forces personnel have been deployed at strategic places across all points leading to the Raj Bhavan.

The Manipur government on Wednesday ordered a probe into the allegations that security personnel forced to cover the state's name on a bus taking journalists to the Shirui Lily festival. *—PTI*

Security has been tightened across Imphal district to prevent any untoward incident PHOTO: PTI

An electricity distribution structure fell on two bikes during a storm near the power station in Noida Sector 19 on Wednesday PHOTO: PTI

## Minor among 3 dead in Delhi dust storm

**NEW DELHI, 22 MAY**

A nine-year-old girl was among the three killed in the massive dust storm and heavy rains that lashed the national capital.

The other two killed included a 22-year-old man and a differently-abled person. 11 were injured in the intense storm and rain on Wednesday evening.

The minor, identified as Sahana alias Chandni, died after an iron window panel fell on her from the third floor of a building.

A case was registered against the owner of house.

In Delhi's Nizamuddin area a high-beam electricity pole collapsed near the Lodhi Road flyover and fell on the road, hitting the differently-abled man passing by on a tricycle.

Azhar, 22, died after a tree fell on him and two motorcycles in north east Delhi's Gokulpuri area.

Six people were reportedly injured after a portion of the grill of an old foot overbridge near Mukherjee Nagar collapsed.

Kashmere Gate and Mangolpuri areas reported more injuries.

Meanwhile, three persons were killed after a strong storm followed by rain swept the Gautam Buddh Nagar district on Wednesday night.

In Greater Noida, a 60-year-old woman and her four-year-old grandson died after a grill from a 21-storey building fell on them as they were trying to escape the strong wind.

In Dadri, a tree fell, killing a school teacher identified as Ramkishan and injuring others.

The storm uprooted many trees, traffic poles and sheds installed on the high-rises in the region. Power supply was also snapped in many areas, leading to traffic congestion. *—PTI*

## Kerala's 4-yr-old raped before murder

**KOCHI, 22 MAY**

The post-mortem examination of the body of a three-year-old Kalyani, who was thrown into the Chalakudy river at Moozhikkulam in Ernakulam by her mother earlier this week, has revealed that the girl was sexually abused and tortured till the day before her murder.

Police said that the youngest brother of the child's father was taken into custody on 20 May on suspicion, and that he has confessed to the crime during interrogation. The sexual abuse took place inside the child's home, they said.

The police said the accused has been placed under arrest and charged under sections of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and the Juvenile Justice Act.

The crime came to light on 19 May after Kalyani's mother Sandhya returned home without the girl. Questioned by the girl's grandmother, Sandhya lied that the she went missing while on a bus.

However, when police confronted Sandhya with CCTV footage showing her near the Chalakudy river, she confessed. The body was recovered by local residents around 3.30am on 20 May. Sandhya was subsequently arrested and charged with murder. *—Agencies*

## 2 held for trespassing Salman's home

**MUMBAI, 22 MAY**

Police have arrested a man and a woman for allegedly separately trespassing on actor Salman Khan's building in Mumbai's Bandra area over the past two days.

Two FIRs have been registered in connection with the incidents.

Jitendra Kumar Singh, 23, on 20 May allegedly entered Galaxy Apartments in Bandra (West), where the Bollywood actor lives.

Singh was first seen roaming around Khan's house in the morning. A policeman deployed there for the actor's security asked him to leave. In a fit of rage, Singh, hailing from Chhattisgarh, smashed his mobile phone on the ground.

He was stopped again and handed over to the Bandra police. Singh entered Galaxy Apartments in a car belonging to another resident of the building.

During interrogation, Singh said that he had tried to sneak in to meet the actor as the police had not allowed him to enter the building.

A woman also entered the building on 21 May and reached up to Khan's flat.

Both Singh and the woman have been arrested and booked for trespassing. *—Agencies*

## Fire razes 200 houses in UP's Budaun district

**BUDAUN, 22 MAY**

A large fire, caused by a spark from a transformer during a storm, destroyed approximately 200 houses in Tappa Jamni village in UP's Budaun district.

Local sources stated that the blaze broke out on Wednesday night amid inclement weather. During the incident, one villager sustained burn injuries while attempting to escape the flames. The injured man was admitted to the Ujhan community health centre for treatment.

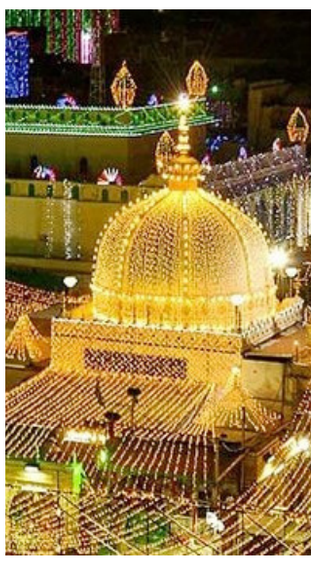
By the time fire brigade and police personnel reached the scene, the fire had already razed around 200 homes, leaving many residents displaced. The storm's strong winds and lightning are believed to have contributed to the ignition of the transformer.

District magistrate Avnish Kumar Rai confirmed there were no fatalities, but noted the loss of cattle in the fire.

The district administration has provided its assurance to assess the extent of the damage and provide compensation to those affected. *—PTI*

## Delhi HC stays CAG audit of Ajmer Sharif dargahs

**NEW DELHI, 22 MAY**



The Delhi High Court has stayed the Comptroller and Auditor General's (CAG) proposed audit of Ajmer Sharif dargah's accounts.

The court was hearing the pleas alleging unlawful search or visit of CAG officials in the petitioners' premises without notice or information which was contrary to the provisions of the Comptroller and Auditor General (Duties, Powers and Conditions of Service) Act, 1971 and the Societies Registration Act, 1860.

Justice Sachin Datta granted the interim stay on the pleas of Anjuman Moinia Fakhria Chishtiya Khuddam Khwaja Sahib Syedzadgan Dargah Sharif, Ajmer in Rajasthan and another registered society.

The court, in its 14 May order, found credibility in the petitioners' contention that the requirements under Section 20 of the CAG Act were not applied or satisfied in the case. The provision deals with the audit of accounts of certain authorities or bodies.

"It is also informed by the counsel appearing for CAG that the audit of the petitioner has not yet commenced even thereafter... as an interim measure, it is directed that till the next date of hearing, no further steps shall be taken by the CAG pursuant to communication dated 30 January, 2025," the court said, posting matter to 28 July. *—PTI*

## 3 die after drinking liquor in Ludhiana

**LUDHIANA, 22 MAY**

Days after the tragic hooch in Punjab's Amritsar claimed 27 lives, three men died after consuming illicit liquor in Ludhiana district.

The victims—Rinku, 40, Debi, 27, and Mangoo, 32 had reportedly consumed alcohol at a vacant plot on Noorwala Road on Wednesday night. They lost consciousness and began frothing at the mouth. They were rushed to the civil hospital, where doctors declared them dead.

The exact cause of their deaths is yet to be confirmed. Autopsy is underway.

In a recent incident in Amritsar, 27 people, mostly daily wagers consumed spurious liquor laced with methanol,a toxic chemical used industrially. Investigations

revealed that the methanol was procured in bulk online to prepare the dangerous brew.

Authorities have warned residents about the dangers of consuming illicit alcohol, which continues to pose a serious health risk across the region. Police have launched an investigation into the Ludhiana deaths and are trying to trace the source of the liquor.

The incident highlights ongoing concerns over illegal alcohol and its deadly consequences. *—PTI*

IDENTITY AFTER 153 YEARS

## *Persian lizard gets official nomenclature*

**KOLKATA, 22 MAY**

Scientists at the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) have recently given an official nomenclature to the Persian Long-Tailed Desert Lizard (Mesalina watsonana), clearing a confusion that persisted for 153 years since its discovery due to the presence of different specimens in museums around the globe.

The lizard was discovered by scientist Ferdinand Stoliczka in 1872, but several syntypes or different specimens, collected by him were scattered in museums in Kolkata, London and Vienna.

This created confusion as to which specific specimen should be officially denoted as lectotype or the sole specimen representing all the specimens.

The Persian long-tailed desert lizard specimen at the Zoological Survey of India's museum in Kolkata PHOTO:X

ZSI scientists Sumidh Ray and Pratyush P Mohapatra carefully examined the old records and followed the rules of naming the species. They finally selected the specimen in Kolkata as the "definitive example of the Mesalina watsonana", a ZSI spokesperson said.

ZSI director Dhriti Banerjee said this new official designation will make future research on similar types of desert lizards much easier.

Stoliczka's collections, which were gathered during expeditions during the colonial era, are some of the earliest scientific records of reptiles in South Asia.

"Stoliczka's work is very important. Many of the original examples he collected are still key to understanding reptile names in this part of the world," Banerjee said.

The scientists' findings have been published in the science journal 'Zootaxa'. *—PTI*

**FLYING HIGH**

The kite festival at Mannavanur Lake meadows, near Kodaikanal in Tamil Nadu, on Thursday. Organised for the first time in the region, the event features a plethora of uniquely shaped kites
***PHOTO: PTI***

# 14K babies in Gaza are on the brink of starvation

After 18 months of punishing airstrikes, raids and an increasingly restrictive siege in Gaza, the United Nations on 20 May, 2025, issued one of its most urgent warnings yet about the ongoing humanitarian crisis: an estimated 14,000 babies were at risk of death without an immediate influx of substantial aid, especially food.

The assessment came a day after Israel allowed the first trickle of aid back into Gaza following its nearly three-month total blockade imposed on 2 March.

But on the first day of that resumption, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported that only nine trucks were allowed into Gaza, when around 500 are required every day. The UN called it "a drop in the ocean of what is urgently needed".

Israel's control of food and aid into Gaza has been a consistent theme throughout the past 18 months. Just two weeks after Israel's massive military campaign in the Gaza Strip began in late 2023, Oxfam International reported that only around 2 per cent of the usual amount of food was being delivered to residents and warned against "using starvation as a weapon of war".

Yet aid delivery continues to be inconsistent and well below what was necessary for the population, culminating in a dire warning by UN experts in early May that "the annihilation of the Palestinian population in Gaza" was possible without an immediate end to the violence.

Already, an estimated near 53,000 Palestinians have died and some 120,000 have been injured in the conflict. Starvation could claim many more. Amid the broader destruction to lives and infrastructure, there is now barely a food system to speak of in Gaza.

Since October 2023, Israeli bombs have destroyed homes, bakeries, food production factories and grocery stores, making it harder for people in Gaza to offset the impact of the reduced imports of food.

Israel's use of food as a weapon of war predates the 7 October attack ***PHOTO: PTI***

But as much as things have worsened in the past 18 months, food insecurity in Gaza and the mechanisms that enable it did not start with 7 October. A UN report from 2022 found that 65 per cent of people in Gaza were food insecure, defined as lacking regular access to enough safe and nutritious food.

Multiple factors contributed to this preexisting food insecurity, not least the blockade of Gaza imposed by Israel and enabled by Egypt since 2007.

Basic foodstuff was allowed, but because of delays at the border, it could spoil before it entered Gaza. A 2009 investigation by Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz found that foods as varied as cherries, kiwi, almonds, pomegranates and chocolate were prohibited entirely.

At certain points, the blockade, which Israel claimed was an unavoidable security measure, has been loosened to allow import of more foods. In 2010, for example, Israel started to permit potato chips, fruit juices, Coca-Cola and cookies.

"The idea is to put the Palestinians on a diet, but not to make them die of hunger," said one Israeli government adviser in 2006.

Echoes of this sentiment can be seen in the Israeli decision in May 2025 to allow only "the basic amount of food" to reach Gaza to purportedly ensure "no starvation crisis develops".The long-running blockade also increased food insecurity by preventing meaningful development of an economy in Gaza.

As a result, in late 2022 the unemployment rate in Gaza stood at around 50 per cent. This, coupled with a steady increase in the cost of food, made affording food difficult for many Gazan households, rendering them dependent on aid, which fluctuates frequently. More generally, the blockade and the multiple rounds of destruction of parts of the Gaza Strip have made food sovereignty in the territory nearly impossible. Much of Gaza's farmland has been rendered inaccessible to Palestinians as a result of post-October 2023 actions by Israel.

The latest ongoing siege has only further crippled the ability of Gaza to be food self-sufficient. By May 2025, nearly 75 per cent of croplands had been destroyed,

The use of starvation as a weapon is strictly forbidden under the Geneva Conventions, a set of statutes that govern the laws of warfare and condemned by UN Resolution 2417.

While there is more evidence than ever before that Israel is using food as a weapon of war, there is also therefore ample evidence that this was the reality long before 7 October, 2023.

*– PTI*

SALAR ساڈا

# Top investors wary of Trump's crypto antics

Top investors in one of US President Donald Trump's crypto projects were invited to dine with him at his luxury golf club in Northern Virginia on the heels of the Senate advancing key pro-crypto legislation and while bitcoin prices soar. It seemed like a triumph for a cryptocurrency industry that has long sought mainstream acceptance.

But Thursday night's dinner for the 220 biggest investors in the $TRUMP meme coin has raised uncomfortable questions about potentially shadowy buyers using the anonymity of the internet to buy access to the president.

While Democrats charge that Trump is using the power of the Presidency to boost profits for his family business, even some pro-Trump crypto enthusiasts worry that the push into meme coins isn't helping their efforts to establish the credibility, stability and legitimacy.

After feeling unfairly targeted by the Biden administration, the industry quickly became a dominant political force, donating huge sums to help Trump and crypto-friendly lawmakers. But that's also served to tether the industry — sometimes uncomfortably — to a President who is using crypto as a platform to make money in unprecedented ways.

"It's distasteful and an unnecessary distraction," said Nic Carter, a Trump supporter and partner at the crypto investment firm Castle Island Ventures, who said the President is "hugging us to death" with his private crypto businesses. "We would much rather that he passes common-sense legislation and leave it at that."

At the swanky Crypto Ball held down the street from the White House three days before he took office on 20 January, Trump announced the creation of the meme coin $TRUMP as a way for his supporters to "have fun."

Meme coins are the crypto sector's black sheep. They are often created as a joke, with no real utility and prone to extremely wild price swings that tend to enrich a small group of insiders at the expense of less sophisticated investors.

The President's meme coin is different and has a clear utility: access to Trump.

Trump's meme coin saw an initial spike in value, followed by a steep drop. The price saw a significant increase after the dinner contest was announced. Its creators, which include an entity controlled by the Trump Organisation, have made hundreds of millions of dollars by collecting fees on trades.First lady Melania Trump has her own meme coin, and Trump's sons, Eric and Don Jr — who are running the Trump Organisation— announced they are partnering with an existing firm to create a crypto mining company.

Crypto is now one of the most significant sources of the Trump family's wealth.

"I'm a big crypto fan," Trump had told reporters aboard Air Force One during last week's trip to the Middle East. That wasn't always true. During his first term, Trump posted in July 2019 that cryptocurrencies were "not money".

Even after leaving office in 2021, Trump told Fox Business Network that bitcoin, the world's most popular cryptocurrency, "seems like a scam."

Trump began to shift during a crypto event at his Mar-a-Lago club in Florida in May 2024, receiving assurances that industry backers would spend lavishly to get him reelected. Another major milestone came last June,

Those close to Trump, including his sons and billionaire Elon Musk, further pushed his embrace of the industry. Sacks is now the Trump administration's crypto czar, and many Cabinet members — including Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick and Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth — have long been enthusiastic crypto boosters."I don't have faith in the dollar," Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said in a 2023 interview. "I'm bullish on bitcoin."

Since Trump took office, many civil suits against several major crypto companies have been dropped or paused, including one alleging that Justin Sun, a China-born crypto entrepreneur, and his company engaged in market manipulation and paid celebrities for undisclosed promotions.

Trump has signed executive orders promoting the industry, including calls to create a government bitcoin reserve. In March, Trump convened the first cryptocurrency summit at the White House. But some of the industry's biggest names, often brash and outspoken, have kept mostly mum on Trump's meme coins and other projects.

"It's not my place to really comment on President Trump's activity," Coinbase CEO Brian Armstrong said at a recent public event.

*– PTI*

Crypto is now one of the most larges sources of US President Donald Trump's wealth ***PHOTO: PTI***

**LETTERS** write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

# *How selfie-editing tools are distorting young people's self image*

Like many of her peers, Abigail, 21, takes a lot of selfies, tweaks them with purpose-made apps, and posts them on social media. But, she says, the selfie-editing apps do more than they were designed for:

"You look at that idealised version of yourself and you just want it – you just want it to be real […] the more you do it, the better you get at it and the more subtle your editing is the easier it is to actually see yourself as that version."

Abigail was one of nearly 80 young people interviewed as part of research into selfie-editing technologies.

The findings, recently published in New Media and Society, are cause for alarm. They show selfie-editing technologies have significant impacts for young people's body image and wellbeing.

Many young people carefully curate how they appear online. One reason for this is to negotiate the intense pressures of visibility in a digitally-networked world. Selfie-editing technologies enable this careful curation.

The most popular selfie-editing apps include Facetune, Faceapp, and Meitu. They offer in-phone editing tools from lighting, colour and photo adjustments to "touch ups" such as removing blemishes.

These apps also offer "structural" edits. These mimic cosmetic surgery procedures such as rhinoplasty (more commonly known as nose jobs) and facelifts. They also offer filters including an "ageing" filter, "gender swap" tool, and "make up" and hairstyle try-ons.

The range of editing options and incredible attention to details and correction of so-called "flaws" these apps offer encourage the user to forensically analyse their face and body, making a series of micro changes with the tap of a finger.

The researchers wanted to understand how image-altering technologies were experienced by young people, and whether these tools impacted how they viewed themselves.

They conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with 33 young people aged between 18-24. They also ran 13 "selfie-editing" group workshops with 56 young people aged 18–24 who take selfies, and who use editing apps in Melbourne and Newcastle, Australia.

Most participants identified as either "female" or "cis woman" (56). There were 12 who identified as either "non-binary", "genderfluid" or "questioning", and 11 who identified as "male" or "cis man". They identified as from a range of ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds.

The incredible attention to detail and correction of so-called 'flaws' encourage users to forensically analyse their face ***PHOTO: PTI***

Facetune was the most widely-used facial-editing app. Participants also used Snapseed, Meitu, VSCO, Lightroom and the built-in beauty filters which are now standard in newer Apple or Samsung smartphones.

Editing practices varied from those who irregularly made only minor edits such as lighting and cropping, to those who regularly used beauty apps and altered their faces and bodies in forensic detail, mimicking cosmetic surgical interventions.

Approximately one third of participants described currently or previously making dramatic or "structural" edits through changing the dimensions of facial features. These edits included reshaping noses, cheeks, head size, shoulders or waist "cinching".

Young people said that selfie taking and editing was an important way of showing "who they are" to the world.

As one participant remarked, it's a way of saying "I'm here, I exist". But they also said the price of being online, and posting photos of themselves, meant they were aware of being seen alongside a set of images showing "perfect bodies and perfect lives".

Participants said they assume "everyone's photos have been edited". To keep up with this high standard, they needed to also be adept at editing photos to display their "best self" – aligning with gendered and racialised beauty ideals.

Photo-editing apps and filters were seen as a normal and expected way to achieve this. However, using these apps was described as a "slippery slope", or a "Pandora's box", where "once you start editing it's hard to stop".

Young women in particular described feeling that the "baseline standard to just feel normal" feels higher than ever, and that appearance pressures are intensifying.

Many felt image-altering technologies such as beauty filters and editing apps are encouraging them to want to change their appearance "in real life" through cosmetic non-surgical procedures such as fillers and Botox.

As one participant, Amber, 19, said, "I feel like a lot of plastic surgeries are now one step further than a filter."

Another participant, Freya, 20, described a direct link between editing photos and cosmetic enhancement procedures. "Ever since I started [editing my body in photos], I wanted to change it in real life […] That's why I decided to start getting lip and cheek filler."

These findings suggest image-editing technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI) filters and selfie-editing apps, have significant impacts for young people's body image and wellbeing.

The rapid expansion of generative AI in "beauty cam" technologies in the cosmetic and beauty retail industries makes it imperative to study these impacts, as well as how young people experience these new technologies.

These cameras are able to visualise "before and after" on a user's face with minute forensic detail.

These technologies, through their potential to alter relationship between technology and the human experience at the deepest level, may have devastating impacts on key youth mental health concerns such as body image. *– PTI*

PHOTO: X

## Nightclub assault: Singer Chris Brown out on $6.7M bail

**LONDON, 22 MAY**

Grammy-winning singer Chris Brown was released on 5 million-pound ($6.7 million) bail Wednesday while facing allegations he beat and seriously injured a music producer with a bottle in a London nightclub in 2023. The decision by a London judge to grant bail will allow Brown to launch a world tour next month that had been thrown into doubt last week when a district judge in Manchester ordered him into custody after he was charged with causing grievous bodily harm with intent. Brown was in a jail in Salford, outside Manchester. American musician Omololu Akinlolu, 38, who performs under the name "Hoody Baby" and is a friend of Brown, was also charged in the assault. *—PTI*

## 14 people trapped as landslides strike two towns in China

**BEIJING, 22 MAY**

Two separate landslides struck Changshi and Guowa townships in southwest China's Guizhou province on Thursday, trapping 14 persons, officials said. Two people were trapped in Changshi, while around a dozen residents in Qingyang Village of Guowa were trapped across six residential buildings involving eight households in the landslides that hit at around 3am and9 am, respectively. China's Ministry of Natural Resources raised its emergency response to geological disasters from Level-III to Level-II at 11am and dispatched a working team to the area to guide rescue operations. The ministry urged swift efforts to verify the situation and to carry out search and rescue operations. *—PTI*

## Australian coast witnesses record floods; two killed

**MELBOURNE, 22 MAY**

Record floodwaters along Australia's east coast have left two dead and two missing, officials said on Thursday, with more heavy rain forecast. Over 500 people have been rescued in New South Wales, north of Sydney, where flooding has surpassed records from 1921 and 1929. Premier Christopher Minns warned some areas could receive up to 30cm of rain in 24 hours, urging 50,000 residents to prepare for evacuation or isolation. A 63-year-old man's body was found in a flooded home, and a man in his 30s died after driving into floodwaters. A 60-year-old woman and a 49-year-old man remain missing. *—PTI*

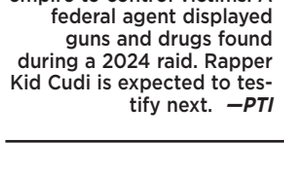


PHOTO: X

## Sean Diddy Comb's former assistant testifies in court

**NEW YORK, 21 MAY**

Sean "Diddy" Combs' former assistant testified Wednesday that he regularly cleaned hotel rooms after the music mogul's sex parties—disposing of alcohol bottles, baby oil, drugs, and tidying up to protect Combs' image. George Kaplan, who worked for Combs from 2013 to 2015, said he was sent to buy MDMA and deliver bags of pills. Granted immunity, Kaplan said Combs frequently threatened his job and once berated him over water bottles. Combs' ex-girlfriend Cassie claimed Kaplan quit after witnessing Combs assault her. Prosecutors allege Combs used threats, drugs, and his empire to control victims. A federal agent displayed guns and drugs found during a 2024 raid. Rapper Kid Cudi is expected to testify next. *—PTI*

# 2 Israeli embassy staffers shot dead in Washington

## Presidents Trump, Netanyahu condemn 'antisemitic' attack

**WASHINGTON, 22 MAY**

Sarah Lynn Milgrim and Yaron Lischinsky were about to get engaged PHOTO: X

Two staff members of the Israeli embassy in Washington were shot dead on Wednesday evening, while leaving an event at a Jewish museum, police said. The suspect yelled, "free, free Palestine" after he was arrested.

Yaron Lischinsky and Sarah Milgrim were leaving the Capital Jewish Museum when the suspect approached a group of four people and opened fire, Metropolitan Police Chief Pamela Smith said at a news conference.

Former Israeli Ambassador to the US Mike Herzog told Israeli Army Radio that the woman killed was an American employee of the embassy and the man was Israeli.

The suspect, Elias Rodriguez, 30, of Chicago, was observed pacing outside the museum before the shooting, walked into the museum after the shooting and was detained, Smith said.

She said law enforcement did not believe there was an ongoing threat to the community.

In response, Israeli missions beefed up their security.

"These horrible DC killings, based obviously on antisemitism, must end, NOW!" US President Donald Trump posted on social media. "Hatred and Radicalism have no place in the USA."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office similarly said he was "shocked" by the "horrific, antisemitic" shooting.

"We are witnessing the terrible price of antisemitism and wild incitement against Israel," he said in a statement.

The statement added that he spoke to Attorney General Pam Bondi, who told him Trump was "involved in managing the incident" and the US would bring the perpetrator to justice.

Israeli Ambassador to the US Yechiel Leiter said the victims were a young couple about to be engaged, saying the man had purchased a ring this week with the intent to propose next week in Jerusalem.

Dan Bongino, Deputy Director of the FBI, wrote on social media that "early indicators are that this is an act of targeted violence". *—PTI*

A worker unloads cargo from a truck carrying humanitarian aid at the offload area of the Kerem Shalom border crossing between Israel and Gaza on Thursday PHOTO: PTI

# Aid groups begin collecting supplies allowed into Gaza

**TEL-AVIV, 22 MAY**

Aid groups have collected humanitarian aid carried by about 90 trucks (at the time of publishing), out of a total of nearly 200 that have entered Gaza since Israel began allowing limited goods in earlier this week, the United Nations said on Thursday.

Jens Laerke, spokesperson for the UN Humanitarian agency OCHA, said the trucks that entered carried medicine, wheat flour and nutrition supplies. Aid groups faced significant challenges distributing the aid because of insecurity, the risk of looting and coordination issues with Israeli authorities, Laerke added.

Under international pressure, Israel has allowed dozens of aid trucks into Gaza after blocking all food, medicine, fuel and other material for nearly three months. But the supplies have been sitting on the Gaza side of the Kerem Shalom crossing with Israel.

**I renew my heartfelt appeal to allow the entrance of dignified humanitarian aid to Gaza and to put an end to the hostilities whose heartbreaking price is being paid by children, the elderly and sick people**

—Pope Leo XIV

Criticism of Israel's conduct intensified this week after for¬mer general and opposition politician Yair Golan accused the government of "killing babies as a hobby," "expelling a population," and "fighting against civilians." The remarks – among the harshest from an Israeli leader, sparked outrage domestically but high¬lighted growing discomfort with the war's toll. Over 53,000 Palestinians have been killed, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

Meanwhile, Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels fire two missiles at Israel. The missiles were fired hours apart on Thursday, each time setting off nationwide air raid sirens.

The Israeli military said it intercepted both missiles, and there were no immediate reports of casualties or damage. *—PTI*

## Launch failure damages Kim's 2nd destroyer

**SEOUL, 22 MAY**

North Korea's second 5,000-ton-class destroyer was damaged during a failed launch ceremony attended by leader Kim Jong Un, state media confirmed Thursday. The vessel became unbalanced and punctured at the bottom after a transport cradle malfunctioned at Chongjin port.

It's rare for Pyongyang to admit military failures, but analysts say the disclosure reflects Kim's commitment to modernising the navy and confidence in future success.

Kim called for a ruling party meeting in June to discuss the failure. *—PTI*

US President Donald Trump and speaker of the House Mike Johnson address the media at Capitol Hill on Thursday PHOTO: X

# US House passes Trump's tax cut bill with 215–214 vote

**WASHINGTON, 22 MAY**

House Republicans stayed up all night to pass their multitrillion-dollar tax breaks package, with Speaker Mike Johnson defying the sceptics and unifying his ranks to muscle President Donald Trump's priority bill to approval on Thursday.

The House launched debate before midnight and by sunrise the vote was called, 215-214, with Democrats staunchly opposed. It next goes to the Senate. "To put it simply, this bill gets Americans back to winning again," said Johnson.

Central to the package is the GOP's commitment to extend USD 4.5 trillion in tax breaks engineered during Trump's first term in 2017, while adding new ones he campaigned on during his 2024 campaign, including no taxes on tips, overtime pay, car loan interest and others.

To make up for some of the lost tax revenue, the Republicans focused on changes to Medicaid and the food stamps programme, largely by imposing work requirements. There's also a massive rollback of green energy tax breaks from the Biden-era Inflation Reduction Act.

Additionally, the package tacks on USD 350 billion in new spending, with about USD 150 billion going to the Pentagon, including for the president's new "Golden Dome" defence shield, and the rest for Trump's mass deportation and border security agenda.

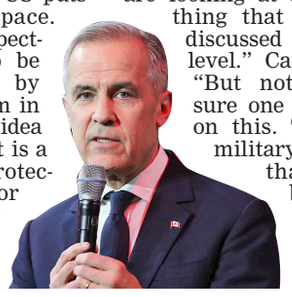
Also tucked into the final version were some unexpected additions – including a USD 12 billion fund for the Department of Homeland Security. *—PTI*

## CANADA CONSIDERING JOINING US GOLDEN DOME PROJECT: CARNEY

**TORONTO, 22 MAY**

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said Wednesday his government is talking to the US about joining US President Donald Trump's future Golden Dome missile defence programme.

The multilayered, USD 175 billion system would the first time the US puts weapons in space. Trump said he expected the system to be fully operational by the end of his term in 2029. "Is it a good idea for Canada? Yes, it is a good to have protections in place for Canadians," Carney said.



Carney confirmed he's had talks with Trump about it and said there are discussions with senior officials. Trump said the Canadian government had contacted his administration indicating it wants to join the programme and that he will work with Ottawa to ensure it contributes its "fair share."

"It's something that we are looking at and something that has been discussed at a high level." Carney said. "But not I'm not sure one negotiates on this. These are military decisions that have been taken in that context." *—PTI*

## Algeria joins BRICS' New Development Bank

**BEIJING, 22 MAY**

The New Development Bank (NDB), founded by BRICS nations, has formally admitted Algeria as a new member, strengthening its global footprint. Algeria deposited its instrument of accession on 19 May, in accordance with NDB's Articles of Agreement, the Shanghai-headquartered bank confirmed.

Welcoming the move, NDB President Dilma Rousseff said Algeria's strategic location, natural resources, and growing economy position it as a valuable contributor to the bank's mission. "We are committed to supporting Algeria's sustainable development agenda and financing impactful projects that improve lives," she said.

Established in 2015 by Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, the NDB has approved over 120 projects worth USD 40 billion across key sectors such as clean energy, infrastructure, environmental protection, and digital development.

Algerian Finance Minister Abdelkrim Bouzerd hailed the membership as a sign of Algeria's confidence in the bank's role as a global development force. "This is a testament to the NDB's capacity to provide innovative financial solutions for its members," he said. With Algeria's inclusion, the NDB continues its expansion beyond the BRICS bloc, aiming to become a leading institution in financing sustainable development across the Global South. *—PTI*

## 100-YR-OLD TEMPLE IN PAK ILLEGALLY OCCUPIED, SAYS COMMUNITY LEADER

**KARACHI, 22 MAY**

The land on which a 100-year-old Shiv temple stands near Tando Jam town of Pakistan's Sindh province has been illegally occupied, a Hindu community representative said on Thursday, appealing to the government to stop the illegal establishment.

"The temple is more than a century old, but these land grabbers have illegally occupied the premises and started unauthorised construction on the land surrounding the temple and obstructed the roads/entrances which lead to the Shiv Mandir," said Shiva Kachhi, who heads the Darawar Ittehad Pakistan. The organisation represents the Hindu community in Pakistan.

Kachhi said a committee managed the Shiv Mandir and about four acres of land around the temple in the Musa Khatian village near Tando Jam, a town about 185km from Karachi, before land grabbers illegally occupied it. *—PTI*

## CHURCH SETTLES SEX CRIME FOR $180M

**NEW ORLEANS, 22 MAY**

The Archdiocese of New Orleans has agreed to a USD 180 million settlement to compensate victims of clergy sexual abuse, marking one of the largest such deals in the Catholic Church's history.

A total of USD 179.2 million will be paid into a trust by the archdiocese, its parishes, and several insurers. The funds will be distributed to survivors once the Church emerges from bankruptcy.

The settlement includes what negotiators called "unprecedented" reforms aimed at preventing future abuse and supporting survivors. These measures include a survivors' bill of rights, revised abuse claim procedures, and expanded services for victims. *—PTI*

**LIFTS BLOCKADE IN HOURS**

# *UK court clears Chagos handover to Mauritius*

**LONDON, 22 MAY**

An aerial view of Diego Garcia in the Chagos Island group PHOTO: US NAVY

A British court lifted a block on the UK government handing the disputed Chagos Islands to Mauritius. A High Court judge earlier issued a temporary injunction blocking the transfer of sovereignty hours before the agreement was due to be signed by the two countries' leaders on Thursday. But after a hearing later on Thursday judge Martin Chamberlain said the injunction should be removed.

The UK has agreed to hand Mauritius the Indian Ocean archipelago, which is home to a strategically important naval and bomber base on the largest of the islands, Diego Garcia. The UK would then lease back the base for at least 99 years.

US President Donald Trump's administration, which was consulted, gave its approval, but finalising the deal was delayed by last-minute negotiations over costs.

The agreement was due to be signed by British Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Mauritian leader Navin Ramgoolam at a virtual ceremony on Thursday morning.

But a High Court judge granted an injunction in the early hours of Thursday, putting a hold on the agreement. It came in response to a claim by two Chagossian women representing the islands' original residents, who were evicted decades ago to make way for the American base.

Bernadette Dugasse and Bertrice Pompe, both British citizens, fear it will become even harder to return once Mauritius takes control of the islands. "The defendant is to maintain the jurisdiction of the United Kingdom over the British Indian Ocean Territory until further order," he said.

"We do not comment on ongoing legal cases," the British government said. "This deal is the right thing to protect the British people and our national security."

Britain evicted as many as 2,000 people from the islands in the 1960s and 1970s so the US military could build the Diego Garcia base, which has supported US military operations from Vietnam to Iraq and Afghanistan. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

## Gold rises to ₹98,650; silver breaches ₹1 mark

**NEW DELHI, 22 MAY**

Gold prices rose by Rs 200 to Rs 98,650 per 10g in the national capital on Thursday, driven by increased local demand and firm global trends, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity also climbed to Rs 98,200. Silver breached the Rs 1 lakh mark, surging Rs 2,040 to Rs 1,01,200 per kg. Global tensions, a weakening US dollar, and concerns over US debt — spurred by former President Trump's proposed budget — boosted safe-haven demand. Spot gold, however, dipped 0.50 per cent to USD 3,298.69/oz internationally. Analysts highlighted investor caution amid US-China tensions and upcoming flash PMI and jobless data from major economies, which could further influence market sentiment.—*PTI*

## Rupee drops to 85.96 against USD amid mkt pressures

**MUMBAI, 22 MAY**

The Indian rupee weakened by 37 paise, closing at 85.96 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, driven by strong dollar demand from importers and foreign banks, alongside rising crude oil prices. Forex traders noted that surging US bond yields are unsettling global investors. Additionally, the diminishing yield gap between Indian and US assets is making the latter more appealing. The ongoing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East have further dampened investor confidence. At the interbank forex market, the rupee opened at 85.59, peaking at 85.58 and dipping to 86.11 throughout the day. This decline marks a total decrease of 54 paise over the past three trading sessions. —*PTI*

## Adani Group's EBITDA hits all-time high

**AHMEDABAD, 22 MAY**

The Adani Group announced a stellar financial performance for 2024-25, with earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortisation (EBITDA) reaching a record Rs 90,000 crore (USD 10.5 billion) and profit after tax soaring to Rs 40,565 crore. The conglomerate also committed a record Rs 126,000 crore (USD 14.7 billion) in capital expenditure. Its return on assets stood at 16.5 per cent, among the highest globally in infrastructure. Key highlights include a 59 per cent increase in solar module sales, expansion of solar capacity, and increased cargo and passenger movements at Adani Airports. The energy segment saw a 30 per cent rise in operational capacity.—*PTI*

## SEBI to finalise equity derivatives expiry policy soon

**NEW DELHI, 22 MAY**

Markets regulator Sebi will issue final directions this month regarding equity derivatives contract expiries, after reviewing public comments on its consultation paper. The proposal suggests standardising expiry days across exchanges to either Tuesdays or Thursdays to optimise scheduling and avoid fixed weekly expiry days. Sebi Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey confirmed the regulator is analysing feedback, with a clarification expected soon. While current expiry days remain unchanged, potential future adjustments are possible. The regulator also proposed requiring exchanges to seek approval before modifying expiry or settlement days, with each exchange permitted one weekly index options contract on the chosen day. Following the consultation, NSE has deferred plans to shift expiry from Thursday to Monday. —*PTI*

# Sensex tumbles 645 points on global sell-off

## Nifty falls 203.75 to settle at 24,609.70 amid US debt concerns

**MUMBAI, 22 MAY**

Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled nearly 1 per cent on Thursday mirroring weak trends in global equities due to rising bond yields and US debt concerns.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 644.64 points or 0.79 per cent to settle at 80,951.99. During the day, it dropped 1,106.71 points or 1.35 per cent to a low of 80,489.92.

The NSE Nifty tumbled 203.75 points or 0.82 per cent to 24,609.70.

From the Sensex firms, Mahindra & Mahindra, Bajaj Finserv, Tech Mahindra, Power Grid, ITC, Hindustan Unilever, Reliance Industries and Maruti were the biggest laggards.

IndusInd Bank, Bharti Airtel and UltraTech Cement were the gainers.

"The key benchmark indices witnessed declines amid US fiscal concerns that the proposed budget bill could significantly increase the national debt, pushing US treasury yields higher due to tepid long-term bond demand. Adding to the pressure, a major credit rating agency's downgrade of the US credit outlook sparked broad-based selloffs across Asian markets," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng settled lower. Markets in Europe were trading in the negative territory.

US markets ended sharply lower on Wednesday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 1.37 per cent to USD 64.02 a barrel.

From the Sensex firms, Mahindra & Mahindra, Bajaj Finserv, Tech Mahindra, Power Grid and ITC were the biggest laggards PHOTO: PTI

- Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) turned buyers on Wednesday after a day's breather. They bought equities worth Rs 2,201.79 crore, according to exchange data. The BSE benchmark jumped 410.19 points or 0.51 per cent to settle at 81,596.63 on Wednesday. The Nifty climbed 129.55 points to 24,813.45.

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REGULATORY CONCERNS

# Talks on to solve NSE IPO issues: Sebi Chief

**NEW DELHI, 22 MAY**

Sebi Chief Tuhin Kanta Pandey on Thursday exuded confidence that all outstanding issues in the National Stock Exchange (NSE) IPO will be resolved soon.

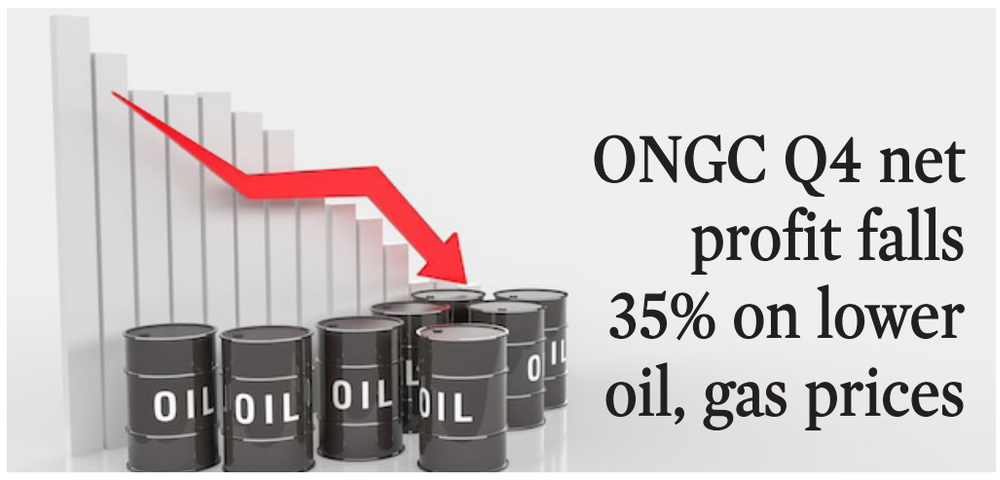
The NSE's IPO proposal has been pending with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) as the regulator has certain concerns.

Sebi's concerns include the compensation given to key management personnel, technology and the majority ownership in Clearing Corporation, among others.

"All the outstanding issues will be resolved and we will move forward...NSE and Sebi are talking, they are resolving the issues and I'm very hopeful, it will be cleared and will move forward," Pandey told reporters at an event organised by Assocham.

Asked when the issues would be resolved, he said , "Can't give a timeline, but we should be soon doing it."

The bourse has restarted its listing process by applying for a No Objection Certificate at the Sebi. It can be noted that NSE's IPO plans have been stuck for over eight years now. The bourse first filed its draft papers in 2016 to mobilise Rs 10,000 crore through an offer for sale by existing shareholders, who were looking to offload 22 per cent shares to the public. However, approval was not granted by Sebi due to regulatory concerns pertaining to governance and the co-location matter. In March, Sebi announced the formation of an internal committee to look into NSE's IPO, and the markets regulator asked NSE to resolve all the issues. —*PTI*




# ONGC Q4 net profit falls 35% on lower oil, gas prices

**NEW DELHI, 22 MAY**

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), the state-owned energy giant, announced a 35 per cent decline in its net profit for the March quarter, primarily due to lower realised oil prices amid near-static output. The company posted a net profit of Rs 6,448 crore for January-March 2025, down from Rs 9,869 crore in the same period last year. Revenue increased marginally by 1 per cent to Rs 34,982 crore.

During the quarter, ONGC sold crude oil at an average of USD 73.72 per barrel, down from USD 80.81 a year earlier. Crude oil production was slightly lower at 4.7 million tonnes compared to 4.714 million tonnes in the previous year, while natural gas output declined to 4.893 BCM from 4.951 BCM.

For the full financial year, ONGC's net profit fell 12 per cent to Rs 35,610 crore, despite revenue remaining steady at Rs 1.37 lakh crore. Average oil price realisation for FY25 was USD 76.90 per barrel, down 4.8 per cent, with gas prices unchanged at USD 6.5 per million British thermal units.

The company drilled a record 578 wells in FY25, the highest in 35 years, supported by government guarantees of a 10 per cent higher gas price from new wells. Capex increased significantly to Rs 62,000 crore, including investments in subsidiaries and renewables.

ONGC's overseas arm, ONGC Videsh Ltd, saw a marginal 1.2 per cent rise in oil production to 7.265 million tonnes, driven by assets in Colombia and South Sudan. However, gas output dropped to 3.013 BCM from 3.340 BCM. —*PTI*

## INDIA TO GROW AT 6.4% TILL 2028: FITCH

**NEW DELHI, 22 MAY**

Fitch Ratings on Thursday raised India's average annual growth potential till 2028 to 6.4 per cent, from 6.2 per cent estimated in November 2023.

"The Indian economy bounced back more strongly than we expected at the time of the 2023 report, suggesting a less adverse "scarring" impact from the pandemic shock," Fitch said while updating the five-year-ahead potential GDP projections.

In its updated forecast, Fitch upped India's average growth estimate for 2023-2028 to 6.4 per cent, from 6.2 per cent.

It said Fitch Ratings has slightly lowered its medium-term potential GDP projections over the next five years for the 10 emerging market economies covered in the Global Economic Outlook (GEO). "Our new projection sees growth at 3.9 per cent on a GDP weighted basis, down from 4 per cent in our previous assessment published in November 2023," it said. —*PTI*

## Sebi to probe violations at IndusInd Bank

**NEW DELHI, 22 MAY**

Markets regulator Sebi is looking into any "egregious violations" by senior management of IndusInd Bank, which has been hit by accounting fraud, its chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey said on Thursday.

Shares of IndusInd Bank ended about 2 per cent higher after tumbling nearly 6 per cent in early trade following the firm reporting a Rs 2,329 crore loss during the March quarter.

After a weak start to the trade, the stock further tanked 5.89 per cent to Rs 725.65 on the BSE. However, later the stock bounced back and ended 1.82 per cent higher at Rs 785.10.

Pandey said the issues at IndusInd Bank will be dealt with by the Reserve Bank of India, but Sebi is also looking at securities market violations by the officials of the crisis-hit bank.

On Wednesday, IndusInd Bank's board said it suspects involvement of certain employees in the fraud and directed the bank to report the matter to investigative agencies and regulatory authorities.

Fraud in the derivatives and microfinance portfolio, as well as balance sheet disclosures, has rattled the private sector bank. The bank, that has seen top-level resignations, has ordered an internal audit review and is undergoing a forensics probe. The internal audit report of the bank revealed "involvement of senior Bank officials, including former Key Management Personnel, in overriding key internal controls". —*PTI*

## FOOD CROP PRICES BELOW MSP: RBI

**MUMBAI, 22 MAY**

According to the latest Reserve Bank of India (RBI) bulletin, average market prices of major food crops, excluding wheat, are trading below the minimum support price (MSP) due to a bumper harvest of kharif and rabi crops. Data up to 19 May indicates a broad-based moderation in cereal and pulse prices, reflecting a favourable harvest season.

While the government fixes MSPs for 23 crops, it procures only limited quantities of wheat and rice for the central food security pool. The RBI article highlighted that edible oil prices, driven by soybean, sunflower, and mustard oil, continued to rise, whereas palm and groundnut oil prices eased. Among vegetables, onion prices further declined, while potato and tomato prices increased.

The report noted that the bumper harvest, combined with policy measures to contain food inflation, has led to mandi prices of most major crops falling below MSP levels, which bodes well for food security. The data covers the period from 1 April to 19 May 2025. States like Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh have announced bonuses over MSP for wheat, at Rs 150 and Rs 175 per quintal. —*PTI*

## Bajaj to take majority stake in KTM

**NEW DELHI, 22 MAY**

Bajaj Auto Ltd announced plans to acquire a controlling stake in Austrian motorcycle manufacturer KTM, which has been facing financial difficulties. Through its wholly-owned subsidiary, Bajaj Auto International Holdings BV (BAIHBV), the company has arranged a debt funding package of ₹800 million (around Rs 7,765 crore) to support KTM's restructuring and revival.

Bajaj Auto, currently holding a 49.9 per cent stake in Pierer Bajaj AG (PBAG), will become the majority owner of KTM pending necessary approvals. The move follows KTM AG's self-administrative restructuring initiated in November 2024 due to liquidity issues and debt pressures. The funding aims to pay off creditors and inject capital to restore KTM's operations and working capital.

- Of the Rs 800 million, Rs 200 million has been infused, with the Rs 600 million being transferred now.

Of the Rs 800 million, Rs 200 million has already been infused, with the remaining Rs 600 million being transferred now. The company's strategic move positions Bajaj as a key player in shaping KTM's future, enabling it to accelerate growth and innovation.

KTM manufactures off-road and street motorcycles under brands such as KTM, Husqvarna, and GASGAS. Bajaj Auto intends to revamp KTM's governance, including reconstituting its board, and explore potential partnerships to enhance long-term competitiveness. The company aims to drive sustainable growth, boost brand value, and strengthen technology leadership. Bajaj emphasised that the increased stake could unlock opportunities for global expansion, brand elevation, and technological advancement, positioning KTM as a major player in the high-performance motorcycle segment worldwide. The move marks a significant step in Bajaj's strategy to expand its international footprint and deepen its involvement in the premium motorcycle market. —*PTI*

ANALYSTS SAY

# *Gen Zs prioritise learning in job decisions*

**MUMBAI, 22 MAY**

As the workplace continues to evolve with automation, GenAI and changing expectations, a Deloitte survey on Thursday revealed that career progression and learning opportunities are among the top factors driving job decisions of India's young workforce.

"India's Gen Zs and millennials are not just adapting to the future of work, they're shaping it. With 85 per cent engaged in weekly upskilling and a strong preference for on-the-job learning, they're building agile, purpose-driven careers aligned with technologies like GenAI," says Saraswathi Kasturirangan, Chief Happiness Officer, Deloitte India.

For employers, this is a call to build cultures anchored in growth, innovation, and continuous learning, she said, quoting the 2025 Deloitte Global Gen Z and Millennial Survey.

For employers, this is a call to build cultures anchored in growth, innovation, and continuous learning PHOTO: PTI

The survey further found that career progression and learning opportunities are among the top factors that are driving job decisions for the young workforce.

However, there is a mentorship shortfall as around half respondents who seek active mentorship from managers but far fewer receive it, the survey stated.

The 2025 Deloitte Global Gen Z and Millennial survey is based on insights from responses from 505 Gen Zs and 304 millennials.

The survey revealed rising doubts about the value of traditional education, as many questioned whether formal degrees alone are enough in a fast-changing job market.

Over 94 per cent of Gen Zs and 97 per cent of millennials said they value hands-on experience over theory and 52 per cent of Gen Zs and 45 per cent of millennials were dissatisfied with the quality of higher education. —*PTI*

## One third of Gen Z interested in markets

**NEW DELHI, 22 MAY**

The demographic dividend of India is presenting a unique opportunity to deepen and broaden India's capital markets, said Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey.

Approximately one-third of Indian Gen Z are participating in the securities market, which highlights an encouraging sign of growing financial engagement at an early age.

Pandey said, "this trend reflects not only the rising trust in formal financial systems but also signals a significant opportunity for long-term wealth creation and inclusive participation in the nation's economic progress."

SEBI chairman also reflected that the market ecosystem has almost triple folded itself since March 2019, which currently stands at 13 crores, this shows growing trust of retail investors in India's capital market. He further adds that there is still large 'potential to expand further'

- Over the last decade, the capital markets have facilitated the infusion of Rs 93 lakh crore into various sectors.

Over the last decade, the capital markets have facilitated the infusion of approximately Rs 93 lakh crore into various sectors. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

## Srikanth enters Malaysia Masters quarterfinal

KUALA LUMPUR, 22 MAY

Seasoned Indian badminton player Kidambi Srikanth entered the quarterfinals of the Malaysia Masters after defeating Ireland's Nhat Nguyen in his second-round match here on Thursday. Srikanth prevailed 23-21, 21-17 in the 59-minute showdown against world number 33 Nguyen. Srikanth, whose world ranking has plummeted to 65 owing to a prolonged lean patch, will face France's Toma Junior Popov in the last-eight stage. Popov ousted another Indian, Ayush Shetty, with a 21-13, 21-17 triumph in his second-round match. Also bowing out was Sathish Karunakaran. He was beaten 14-21, 16-21 by Toma's brother and doubles partner, Christo Popov.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X

## Iga Swiatek's reign under threat at Roland Garros

ROME, 22 MAY

Iga Swiatek has reigned supreme at Roland Garros since winning the Grand Slam for the first time as a teenager in 2020, but a difficult past year means she is far from the obvious choice this time for the title. Swiatek dropped to a ranking of fifth this week, ending a 173-week stay inside the top two, which now likely means she faces a tougher path to a fifth French Open crown in six attempts. She is without a title since winning for the third time in a row in Paris last June, the first woman to do so since Justine Henin lifted the trophy from 2005-07. "It hasn't been easy. For sure, I'm doing something wrong.—*PTI*

## Major difference for McIlroy at PGA after winning Masters

PARIS, 22 MAY

Rory McIlroy says winning the Masters to complete a long-sought career Grand Slam will change how he feels going into other majors, starting at next week's PGA Championship. World number two McIlroy defeated England's Justin Rose last month at Augusta National to capture his fifth major title, and first since 2014, to finally take the green jacket and complete the career Slam. The 36-year-old from Northern Ireland joined Jack Nicklaus, Tiger Woods, Gary Player, Gene Sarazen, and Ben Hogan with wins in all four major tournaments.—*PTI*

## Matteo Berrettini pulls out of French Open due to injury

PARIS, 22 MAY

Matteo Berrettini has pulled out of the French Open due to an unspecified injury and will be replaced in the main draw by a lucky loser, organizers said on Thursday. Play at Roland-Garros begins on Sunday. The No. 28-ranked Italian retired against Casper Ruud in the third round of the Italian Open last week. Two weeks before, he withdrew from his third-round match against Jack Draper in Madrid due to an abdominal injury. "I just ran out of time to feel 100% ready to compete at the level that is needed," Berrettini posted on Instagram. "I'm looking forward to competing on grass and am already preparing with my team.—*PTI*

# RCB look to strengthen top two spot

### Bengaluru will aim to secure a top-two league stage finish for the first time in nine years

LUCKNOW, 22 MAY

Already through to the playoffs, Royal Challengers Bengaluru will aim to secure a top-two league stage finish for the first time in nine years when they take on Sunrisers Hyderabad in their Indian Premier League clash here on Friday.

RCB hasn't finished inside the top two since the 2016 season when they eventually signed off as runners-up.

However, currently second on the table with 17 points from 12 games, victories in their remaining two matches could lock a top-two spot.

Friday's fixture, originally a home game for the Bengaluru outfit, was shifted due to the onset of monsoon.

RCB was in red-hot form before the league's disruption due to the India-Pakistan military conflict, and the side had strung together four consecutive wins. But the momentum was halted by a washout in their first game after resumption. Following a 20-day break, it will be interesting to see whether they retain their rhythm and competitive edge.

The ever-reliable Virat Kohli has been in imperious form, scoring seven fifties in 11 innings and anchoring the top order with characteristic elegance. Skipper Rajat Patidar, Tim David, and Romario Shepherd have complemented him well with timely bursts of power hitting.

Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Virat Kohli and teammates celebrate the win PHOTO: PTI

**SRH VS RCB**

| HEAD TO HEAD | |
|---|---|
| PLAYED: | 25 |
| SRH Won: | 13 |
| RCB Won: | 11 |
| NO RESULT | 1 |

SRH vs RCB Match starts at 7.30 pm IST

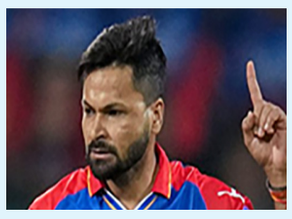
**Seifert to replace Bethell for IPL play-offs**

Royal Challengers Bengaluru on Thursday signed New Zealander Tim Seifert as a replacement for England batter Jacob Bethell, who will be unavailable for the IPL playoffs due to national commitments.The replacement will be effective from May 24, the BCCI said in a statement. Seifert, who has scored 1540 runs in 66 T20s for the Blackcaps, has played only

three games in the IPL previously and last featured in the tournament in 2022. He will join RCB for Rs two crore."Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) have signed Tim Seifert as Jacob Bethell is set to leave from TATA Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025 for England on 24 May 2025. —*PTI*

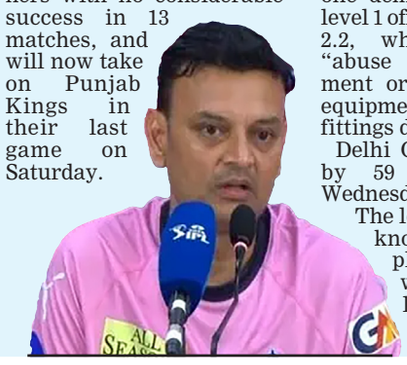
## DC Failure to find a settled opening pair: Badani

MUMBAI, 22 MAY



The failure to find a settled opening pair throughout the season is one of the reasons why Delhi Capitals have not progressed into the IPL knockout stage despite an impressive start, says head coach Hemang Badani.

Delhi Capitals crashed out of the race to reach the IPL playoffs with a 59-run loss to Mumbai Indians here on Wednesday, which was also their fifth defeat in the last seven matches, with one victory and a washed-out contest. Delhi Capitals tried out as many as seven partners with no considerable success in 13 matches, and will now take on Punjab Kings in their last game on Saturday.



**DC's Mukesh Kumar fined 10% of match fees**

Delhi Capitals pacer Mukesh Kumar has been fined 10 per cent of his match fees for breaching the IPL Code of Conduct during his team's loss against Mumbai Indians here.

Mukesh was also handed one demerit point for his level 1 offence under Article 2.2, which deals with "abuse of cricket equipment or clothing, ground equipment or fixtures and fittings during a match."

Delhi Capitals lost to MI by 59 runs here on Wednesday.

The loss meant DC were knocked out of the playoff contention, with MI sealing the last available spot. —*PTI*

## Visa issues sorted for 25 athletes

NEW DELHI, 22 MAY

The visa issues faced by 25 athletes bound for the Asian Athletics Championships in South Korea beginning May 27 has been sorted and the contingent will reach the host country on time, a top official of the national federation said on Thursday.

We have got the visas (of the concerned athletes) in the evening (Thursday) through the efforts of the Sports Ministry and (South Korean Embassy. The matter is sorted out AFI Secretary General Sandeep Mehta told reporters before the team's departure here.It's learnt that the visas of 25 athletes were delayed due to various reasons.Out of the 59 athletes, those based at the Thiruvananthapuram training centre will leave for Gumi Thursday night from the Kerala capital itself. Those whose training bases are in Bangalore, Patiala, and Mumbai will leave from Delhi also Thursday night.The athletes will have two to three days of acclimatisation in Korea. We have picked the best team and we are expecting 25 to 30 medals this time, Mehta added.In the 2023 edition of the biennial championships in Bangkok. —*PTI*

**ENDS LONG TROPHY DROUGHT**

Tottenham Hotspur's players including South Korean forward #07 Son Heung-Min, celebrate with the trophy PHOTO: X / @SPURSOFFICIAL

# Tottenham beats Man United 1-0

SPAIN, 22 MAY

Tottenham's title drought is finally over. Spurs beat Manchester United 1-0 to win the Europa League final and lift their first European trophy in more than four decades on Wednesday.

It is the first major title for Tottenham since it won the English League Cup in 2008, and its first European triumph since it won its second UEFA Cup, the equivalent of the Europa League now, in 1984.

Brennan Johnson squeezed in the winner at the end of the first half to help Spurs salvage a dismal season in which it will finish near the bottom of the Premier League standings.

"This is what it's all about," Johnson said. "This club hasn't won a trophy for 17 years. This is what it means; it means so much. Ever since I came here, it's been, 'Tottenham are a good team but can never get it done.' We got it done."

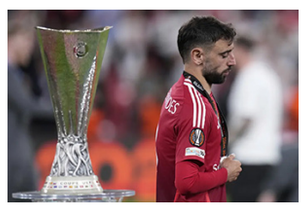
The title guarantees Spurs a spot in next season's Champions League and brings some much-needed relief for manager Ange Postecoglou after he struggled to keep his team on track all year.

The victory in Europe's second-tier competition comes six years after Tottenham fell short against Liverpool in the Champions League final. Tottenham finished its Europa League campaign with 10 wins, three draws, and two losses.

No team has won more games in the UEFA Cup-Europa League than Tottenham, according to UEFA. Its 98th victory in the competition on Wednesday moves it clear of the joint record of 97 it previously held with Roma.

**Man United faces more financial turmoil after Europa League final loss**

The financial consequences



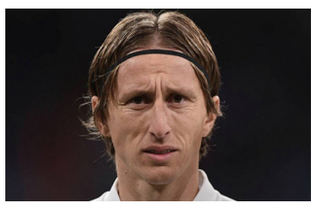
Bruno Fernandes offers to leave Manchester United PHOTO: X

of Manchester United losing in the Europa League final should be painful and affect the club for years.

It was a zero-sum game Tottenham won 1-0 on Wednesday: Winner goes into the Champions League plus the UEFA Super Cup game in August and loser is out of Europe next season and gets nothing. United lost a drab match despite, as football finance expert Kieran Maguire noted on Thursday, having higher revenue than Tottenham and spending 64% more on wages for a more expensively acquired squad of players. —*PTI*

### Tottenham trio forced to wait for winner's medal

Amid the celebrations that followed Tottenham's Europa League triumph, three players were left waiting for their winners' medals. Manager Ange Postecoglou was the first to receive a medal from UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin following the 1-0 win over Manchester United. Injured trio James Maddison, Timo Werner, Lucas Bergvall, and Will Lankshear - who spent the second half of the season on loan at West Brom - were also in the line and had a medal draped around their neck.



## LUKA MODRIC IS LEAVING REAL MADRID

MADRID, 22 MAY

Real Madrid and midfielder Luka Modric have agreed to part ways after the Club World Cup. The 39-year-old Modric will leave after an "unforgettable time as a player at our club," Madrid said on Thursday.

"Real Madrid wishes to express its immense gratitude and appreciation for a player who has become a true legend both of our club and world football." Modric arrived at Madrid in 2012 and became a key player during one of the most successful periods in the club's history. —*PTI*

## WORLD BOXING'S MEMBERSHIP LIST GROWS PAST 100

DUBAI, 22 MAY

World Boxing now counts over 100 national federations as members after its executive board approved 17 more applications to increase its list to 106, the federation said on Thursday. World Boxing, established in 2023 amid concerns over the governance of the International Boxing Association (IBA), was granted provisional recognition by the International Olympic Committee in February and will run the boxing competitions in the 2028 Olympics. —*PTI*

FORMULA ONE 2025

# *Max conquers Imola in Red Bull's 400th race*

MONACO, 22 MAY

Away from all the chaos, Verstappen stormed to the chequered flag for his second win this season, a crucial fightback after a rocky start to 2025. It also commemorated Red Bull's 400th Grand Prix start, a landmark achievement on a track where it has seen success thanks to its trailblazer.

If there's anyone in Formula One who understands the art of maintaining incredible streaks, it's reigning world champion Max Verstappen. From having the most wins and points in a row to winning four consecutive drivers' titles, he is an expert in the subject. However, 2025 brought a change in fortune. Heading into Imola, the seventh race of the season, Verstappen had only one win under his belt, a stark contrast to previous years, where he had already claimed four victories by this point.

Earlier, McLaren looked poised for another strong weekend after dominating all practice sessions. And sure enough, it was Oscar Piastri who once again outpaced teammate Lando Norris to snatch his third career pole position.

Piastri, McLaren's rising star, had taken over the reins. The young Australian delivered a breakthrough performance with one win and then three more in succession, launching himself to the top of the standings as the second quarter of the 24-race calendar began.

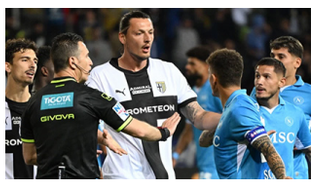
But write off Verstappen at your peril.

At the iconic Autodromo Internazionale Enzo e Dino Ferrari, better known as Imola, the Red Bull driver sent a powerful message.

With a bold overtake at Turn 1, Verstappen surged into the lead and never looked back. His victory at the Emilia-Romagna Grand Prix marked his fourth consecutive win at the circuit. —*PTI*

## Napoli on brink of title glory in Serie A finale

DUBAI, 22 MAY



Napoli are on the brink of claiming their second Serie A title in three seasons as they head into the final weekend of the campaign leading Scudetto rivals Inter Milan by a single point. Antonio Conte's team host Cagliari in front of what will be a packed Stadio Diego Armando Maradona on Friday night, at the same time as Inter kick off at in-form Como. Last weekend's dramatic goalless draw at Parma has left Napoli needing to match or better Inter's result at Como to secure a fourth league crown.

After that, Conte's future at Napoli is still in doubt with Italian media widely reporting that he will return to Juventus, where he spent the majority of his trophy-packed playing career and won three league titles as coach.

"Winning the Scudetto would repay all of the effort that I've put in this season. I know that I'm very tired and that I'm just about OK to get to the end of the season," said Conte after Sunday's stalemate.

Inzaghi was enraged at the penalty from which Lazio's Pedro equalised for the second time on Sunday. —*PTI*